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ABSTRACT

The United States Congress enacted the Educational Partnerships Act in 1988. The Educational Partnerships Program (EPP) stimulated the creation of educational partnerships to demonstrate their contribution to educational reform. The Office of Educational Research (OERI) provided funds to 30 educational partnerships. This document contains five case studies, each of which focuses on one aspect of an educational partnership: an integrated-services partnership, a health-and-social-services partnership, a storefront program for dropouts, a school-to-work transition partnership, a curriculum-and-instruction-focused partnership, and a multifocus partnership. Some of the lessons learned include: (1) Outside funding stimulates action; (2) each participating organization is challenged to change policies and procedures; (3) partnership approaches require adaptation to fit each community, school district, and school; (4) organizational mavericks need support to strengthen the program; (5) a shared vision and deep commitment among partners can overcome program design weaknesses; (6) leadership is critical in a complex partnership; and (7) educational partnerships may be used to leverage additional funding for activities or to garner support for school reform in a community. The appendix lists members of the educational partnerships study group. (LMI)

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Educational Partnerships

Case Studies

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Executive Summary

Congress enacted the Educational Partnerships Act in 1988 (Title VI, Subtitle A, Chapter 5 of the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988, Public Law No. 100-418). The Educational Partnerships Program (EPP) stimulated the creation of educational partnerships to demonstrate their contribution to educational reform. The EPP was administered by the Educational Networks Division, Programs for the Improvement of Practice, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI). The authorizing legislation required documenting the partnerships that received assistance, assessing their impact on educational institutions, evaluating the extent to which they improved their communities' climate for support of education, and identifying promising activities.

OERI provided funds to 30 educational partnerships, and this document contains case studies of 5, which were selected because each of the case studies illustrates a particular focus for an educational partnership. For example, one case study is of a partnership whose main concern is providing health and social services through the schools; another is an innovative program that focuses on students who have dropped out of school; the third is concerned primarily with the transition from school to work; the fourth, with improving curriculum and instruction; and the fifth is an extremely complex partnership with multiple objectives and foci.

The case studies reveal the problems and successes typical of educational partnerships. They provide illustrations that illuminate general conclusions about educational partnerships and give readers a sense of the life of a partnership.

The "lessons learned" from the case studies are:

- Outside funding stimulates action.
- Each participating organization is challenged to change policies and procedures to accommodate a new way of working with others.
- Partnership approaches require adaptation to fit each community, school district, and school.
- Organizational mavericks may be a source of creative and meaningful programs, but they need support to strengthen and improve the program.
- A shared vision and deep commitment among partners can overcome weaknesses in program design and implementation.
- Even with confusion about how the partnership structure relates to the program, the partnership itself can be institutionalized.
- Leadership is critical in a complex partnership.
- Leaders who reflect commitment to particular programs and processes may be more successful than leaders who see themselves as facilitators.
- Identifying and solving problems, using adaptive planning, contributes to success.
- Skilled and committed staff empowered to carry out partnership plans are an important element in project success.
- A complex partnership can be strengthened by breaking it down into components.

- University students are a valuable resource for classroom teachers, even if the students are not preservice teachers.
- Highly stressed large urban school districts pose extreme challenges to university-based partnerships.
- When partnerships do not receive feedback regularly, their importance may dwindle.
- Educational partnerships can be used to leverage additional funding for activities deemed important by the community.
- Educational partnerships can be used to garner support for school reform in a community.

Each of the projects included in the case studies is disguised for two reasons. First, while on site, we promised those we interviewed that they would be anonymous. This increased the candor with which they spoke to us. In the technical reports that were derived from the cross-site analyses, anonymity easily could be preserved, but in the case studies, it will be easier for those who know the site to identify particular informants. Second, although we believe that evaluators are obliged to present both positive and negative information, we also know that individuals can be harmed by such presentation. Consequently, we have chosen to mask the sites and individuals to decrease opportunity for such harm.

Acknowledgments

This set of case studies grew out of the Documentation and Evaluation of the Educational Partnerships Program. It is informed by the work of the other members of the study team, Treseen Fleming-McCormick, Mahna Schwager, and Glenn Nyre of the Southwest Regional Laboratory and Jacqueline Danzberger of the Institute for Educational Leadership. The case studies benefited greatly from reviews and comments made by the members of the Educational Partnerships Program Study Group. Additional support and reviews were provided by colleagues in OERI. Thanks also go to Bob LeGrand for his valuable editorial comments.

Partnerships that were funded through the Educational Partnerships Program were the source of information for the case studies. The efforts of project staff members, individuals in partner organizations, and teachers and administrators in participating school districts are reflected in the document. The willingness of already busy people to provide information to the study team and reflect on their experiences is appreciated.

Particular acknowledgments go to Susan Gruskin, who served as program manager for the Educational Partnerships Program through most of its existence, and Carolyn Warren, who served as manager during the last year and provided support to our efforts. Their insights, critiques, and assistance much improved our efforts.

Contents

Executive Summary iii

Acknowledgments v

Introduction 1

Integrated Services Partnership 3

- Introduction 3
- Context 6
- Initiation 7
- Implementation 8
- Impact 12
- Institutionalization 12
- Conclusion 13

Storefront School Partnership 15

- Introduction 15
- Context 16
- Initiation 16
- Implementation 17
- Impact 22
- Institutionalization 25
- Conclusion 27

School-to-Work Partnership 29

- Introduction 29
- Context 30
- Initiation 31
- Implementation 32
- Impact 39
- Institutionalization 40
- Conclusion 41

Curriculum-Focused Partnership 43

- Introduction 43
- Context 43
- Initiation 44
- Implementation 45
- Impact 49
- Institutionalization 51
- Conclusion 52

Multifocus Partnership 55
  Introduction 55
  Context 57
  Initiation 58
  Implementation 59
  Impact 66
  Institutionalization 68
  Conclusion 70

References 75

Appendix: Educational Partnership Study Group 77

Introduction

Congress enacted the Educational Partnerships Act in 1988 (Title VI, Subtitle A, Chapter 5 of the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988, Public Law 100-418). The Educational Partnerships Program (EPP) stimulated the creation of educational partnerships to demonstrate their contribution to educational reform. The EPP was administered by the Educational Networks Division, Programs for the Improvement of Practice, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI). The authorizing legislation required documenting the partnerships that received assistance, assessing their impact on educational institutions, evaluating the extent to which they improved their communities' climate for support of education, and identifying promising activities.

The Southwest Regional Laboratory (SWRL), assisted by the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL), conducted the documentation and evaluation study. Three technical reports have been produced from the study, as well as a *Guide to Developing Educational Partnerships* and *A Guide to Promising Practices in Educational Partnerships*. This document is a sixth product resulting from the study. It includes case studies of five partnerships funded by OERI. The case studies are designed to provide rich descriptions of educational partnerships. They illustrate the problems and successes experienced by partnerships.

OERI provided funds to 30 educational partnerships, and this document contains case studies of only 5. Readers may well question how we selected the five. Selections were made because each of the case studies illustrates a particular focus for an educational partnership. For example, one case study is of a partnership whose main concern is providing health and social services through the schools; another is an innovative program that focuses on students who have dropped out of school; the third is concerned primarily with the transition from school to work; the fourth, with improving curriculum and instruction; and the fifth is an extremely complex partnership with multiple objectives and foci.

Not all of the case studies are of partnerships that were completely successful. Indeed, even the most successful experienced major problems. In addition to selecting partnerships that represent fairly typical content of educational partnerships, we chose examples that either illustrate the types of problems and successes that partnerships experience or raise basic questions about educational partnerships. In contrast to the technical reports, which provide general conclusions about the needed ingredients for successful educational partnerships, the case studies are designed to give readers a sense of the life of a partnership.

The case studies were derived from two major sources of information. First, project-generated documents, including reports, local evaluations, and products, served as a major information source. Second, each project was visited annually by two people for at least two days. The onsite visits involved observations of partnership events as well as interviews with key participants and recipients of client services. These sources, then, were used to develop pictures of the partnerships as they developed over time. The same sources were used for cross-site analyses, which allowed us to develop the generalizations included in the technical reports.

Each of the projects included in the case studies is disguised. Although some who set out to "crack the case" may be able to identify the specific partnerships that are included, in general, we have tried to mask the communities and participants. For most of the projects, this has been an easy task. After all, many of the OERI-funded partnerships included universities, a variety of businesses, and social service agencies. However, in some instances, it has been necessary to change the description of a particular partner in order to disguise the project. When we did so, we were true to the nature of the relationships and interactions.

Disguising the sites for the case studies has two purposes. First, while on site, we promised those we interviewed that they would be anonymous. This increased the candor with which they spoke to us. In the technical reports that were derived from the cross-site analyses, anonymity easily could be preserved, but in the case studies, it will be easier for those who know the site to identify particular informants. Second, although we believe that evaluators are obliged to present both positive and negative information, we also know that individuals can be harmed by such presentation. Consequently, we have chosen to mask the sites and individuals to decrease the opportunity for such harm.

All the case studies are organized similarly. They begin with a general introduction that includes information about why the particular EPP project was selected for inclusion in the case studies as well as highlights of the important findings from the case. Findings include what can be learned from the case as well as new questions raised by it. The introduction also contains a brief description of the partnership, including the activities it sponsored. The studies then move to a description of the context in which the partnership developed, including a general description of the locale and more specific descriptions of relationships among participating organizations prior to the receipt of OERI funding. The third section in each case study presents information about the initiation of the partnership. As the technical reports indicate, actions at the time of partnership initiation had a lasting influence on partnership development. Fourth, we present information about implementation, both of the partnership structure and the activities it sponsors. The implementation section also notes any changes in the partnership or its activities that occurred over time. Fifth, we note the impact of the partnership. The sixth section includes information about the extent to which partnership structures and activities were institutionalized. Each case study concludes with a brief discussion of the important findings related to partnerships illustrated by the case and the further issues the case raises.

Although all case studies are organized similarly, there are differences across cases in how the issues are addressed. For example, the presentation of changes that occurred during the implementation of the partnership varies based on the particular problems encountered by each partnership. All case studies include information about how partnership structure and activities changed (or remained the same) over time, but there has been no attempt to ensure that all cases address the same issues. For example, in a partnership that was implemented in several school sites, issues that arose at the schools may be important, but such concerns may not have been raised in other partnerships. The cross-project analyses included in the technical reports are based on comparisons of partnership problems and solutions. Case studies, in contrast, allow the unique qualities of a partnership to show.

Integrated Services Partnership

Introduction

The Integrated Services Partnership (ISP) illustrates a common approach to dealing with the multiple problems of children and youth in schools. As stated in Melaville and Blank (1993):

> Across America, people are recognizing that all of the institutions and agencies whose mission is to nurture and strengthen children and families must collaborate. They realize that no single institution has the resources or capacity to do the job alone. (p. vii)

In the medium-sized city that received OERI funding for the ISP, that realization came prior to the availability of funds but was only fully implemented with the receipt of funds. The ISP illustrates an approach to changing the educational system that involves increasing the relationships among the variety of service providers that serve families' and children's needs. The school, in such approaches, is an essential part of a web of service providers that, it is believed, can work together to increase students' and families' health, safety, and achievement. The ISP provides an opportunity to examine the barriers to and opportunities afforded by such an approach.

The important findings from the ISP are:

1. Outside funding stimulates action.
2. Each participating bureaucracy is challenged to change policies and procedures to accommodate a new way of providing service.
3. Partnership approaches need to be adapted to each participating school's needs.

Brief Description

The ISP was created by the City Public Schools (CPS) to provide support services to students and their families at three schools in a single neighborhood (Dodger Elementary School, Padres Middle School, and Giant High School). The ISP was governed by a steering committee that included:

- the principals of the participating schools;
- the director of the Welfare Department;
- representatives from two departments of the City University Medical School (CUMS);
- a representative from the City University School of Education;
- the chief executive officer of a local hospital;
- management representatives from the State Department of Health;
- the city planner; and
- executive officers from not-for-profit agencies.

During the course of the project, those directly involved in providing service also met as part of the steering committee. The original role of the steering committee was to influence the allocation of resources and services.

ISP activities at each school were choreographed by a school-site coordinator, who worked closely with school staff members, staff from the other participating organizations, and parents and community members. Organizations participating in the ISP included:

- City Public Schools (CPS);
- City University Medical School (CUMS);
- City University (CU)
- the Welfare Department; and
- the Center for Conflict Reduction (CCR)

The services provided at the school sites included medical services, conflict reduction, parent services, welfare, and counseling services. Each of these will be described in turn.

Medical Services

Giant High School had a school health clinic prior to the inception of the ISP, which expanded physically as part of the project. In addition, the principal allowed health personnel to dispense birth control. At Giant, the medical staff worked fairly independently from others involved in the ISP.

The nurse's and counselors' offices were rearranged to accommodate the provision of health services at Padres Middle School. Although the rooms were not private because fire department regulations prevented full closure to the ceiling, the doctors found ways to adjust. For example, during private conversations, doctors often played the radio to keep from being overheard. Often, the health clinic was the initial point of contact for students. After the initial medical service was provided, students frequently were referred to another service offered by the collaborative, such as counseling or dispute resolution. According to a participating nurse practitioner, students using the clinics at the middle school and high school saw a staff person an average of two times.

The elementary school chose not to have a medical clinic on site. Instead, the services offered at Dodger Elementary School focused on health education and entry exams for kindergarten students on campus, as requested by parents.

Conflict Reduction

A conflict resolution program at the high school pre-dated the partnership. The CCR held conflict and dispute resolution classes and sessions at the middle and high school. The students were provided with conflict reduction services and training in mediation techniques.

At the middle school the on-site coordinator frequently referred students to CCR (or other) services. Usually, students' conflicts were a result of disagreements with teachers or caregivers and were addressed in private sessions.

The conflict resolution program originally was seen as a way to decrease truancy and dropouts at Giant High School, but the program was unable to gain commitment from teachers and other staff, and staff from CCR were unwilling to change their approach.

Parent Services

The ISP provided parent services for students and families. The elementary school offered activities and workshops for both parents and children. Students at the middle school participated in a sibling group. At the high school, the parent coordinator sponsored a parenting course for pregnant and parenting students. Although the target population for the group was young women, fathers and fathers-to-be also participated. Approximately 40 students received services at Giant through the parent group. Speakers and workshops were coordinated with other social service agencies, and services were provided to students on campus. Fathers and fathers-to-be were referred to a service provider sponsoring an off-campus group specifically designed for teen fathers.

Welfare

The Welfare Department moved caseworkers to the three participating schools, where they interviewed applicants and processed applications, as well as provided the required follow-up support. The long-term goal was to move all welfare activities to the schools, including reassigning welfare recipients who had applied through welfare headquarters. In addition, the caseworkers and other ISP personnel, particularly the school-site coordinator, were supposed to share information so that an integrated plan for family services could be developed. This worked best at Dodger Elementary School and least well at Giant High School.

Serving welfare clients at sites other than headquarters not only required changes in personnel assignments and interactions, but also involved networking computers so that material entered at the schools would be on file at headquarters, where further processing occurred. The ISP experienced some problems with the computers, which slowed progress and led to some morale problems. The problem was greatest at Padres, but the caseworker at Dodger helped with the intake.

Counseling Services

Social workers from CU counseled students at each school. At Dodger Elementary School, students were referred to the social workers by the school counselor, teachers, and principal. The same process, with the addition of the assistant principal as a member of the team, was used at Padres Middle School. Each referral was discussed at a weekly meeting involving the school team and the social workers, which facilitated communication and gave greater insight into the needs of particular students. In addition, the social workers taught some classes to fifth- and sixth-grade students.

At Giant High School, the social workers counseled a number of students with very serious problems. Four such students counseled by the social workers were hospitalized. Other students had problems related to alcohol and other drug (AOD) abuse and violent crimes.

Context

The city in which the ISP is located serves just under 100,000 students in over 100 schools. The ISP itself served a neighborhood with a largely low-income, ethnically diverse population. Three schools, in a feeder school relationship, were involved in the ISP: Dodger Elementary School, Padres Middle School, and Giant High School.

The elementary school, Dodger, provides educational services to about 500 students. Over 55 percent of the students are Hispanic, and about 15 percent are American Indians. A little over 20 percent are white, and the remaining 10 percent are African American and Asian American students. Most of the Asian American students have roots in Vietnam. Free or reduced price lunch is provided to about 90 percent of the students, and the mobility rate is about 94 percent.

Padres Middle School is more evenly split, with 41 percent Hispanic and 37 percent white students. Only 20 percent of the students are on free or reduced price lunch, but the mobility rate, although lower than at Dodger, is high (60 percent). The middle school includes students from widely different economic backgrounds. A majority of the white students live in a middle class community, and the Hispanic and Asian American students reside in a highly mobile, largely immigrant community with a high poverty level.

Giant High School has demographic characteristics similar to those of Padres.

CPS prides itself on being a "progressive city school system," participating in numerous innovations over the years. All CPS schools were involved in state-based management and shared decisionmaking school restructuring efforts, and several CPS schools were pilot sites for a state program. The state and the district are deeply involved in the National Science Foundation's State Systemic Initiative. In addition, the district had been involved in other types of systemic change efforts. However, a newly elected majority on the school board was critical of some of the innovations, and staff members were unsure of how much support for improvement efforts they would continue to receive.

The university had a historic commitment to working with the city and its schools. For example, neighborhood clinics were purposely sited near schools so families could easily have access to them. Medical students were required to work with the clinics early in their training and encouraged to develop relationships with the community by volunteering at schools or coaching community-based sports activities.

The ISP steering committee met for approximately two years prior to the receipt of OERI funds. The group made an earlier, unsuccessful attempt to receive outside funding. Although members of the steering committee expressed disappointment about their failure to receive money, they believed that actually writing the proposal helped them sharpen their thinking about what they wanted to accomplish. When they responded to the EPP grant announcement, they were more focused and, consequently, successful in receiving funds. According to all participants, the steering committee might have died slowly if no outside money were received to give impetus to implementing activities. The two years of discussion, however, provided a strong base on which to build a program.

Initiation

The ISP was viewed by all CPS participants as a "natural" outgrowth of the school restructuring efforts. They believed that the district's restructuring process led to increased awareness of students' and families' needs for social assistance in addition to educational services. In addition, some elements of a comprehensive child and family support system had been in place for quite some time, including the clinic at Giant High School. The district and the medical school, which sponsored the clinic, recognized that the school-based clinics reached students who otherwise would have not received health services. The ISP enabled the district to increase the scope of the collaborative model.

The school district staff thought that the school-based model of service delivery created better access to services for students and their families than the provision of services off campus. Service providers believed that students and their families may not follow up on referrals for several reasons, including language barriers, unfamiliarity with service providers, or basic distrust of the system. Changing the service venue required that social service providers change their mode of operation. With the support of the superintendent, the project director and the grant writer championed these ideas throughout the school district and local community.

The social service agencies had their own motives for participating. For example, the medical school and the community-based health clinics had successful ventures with the school district, including the clinic at Giant High School. The CCR previously had provided services in the schools. Both the social service agencies and the CCR wished to expand their services.

The steering committee saw the receipt of EPP funding as the mechanism pushing the group to work collaboratively instead of individually. Members of the steering committee believed that funding provided the impetus for the committee to move forward and each participating agency to assess its role in the collaborative and determine how to work with the identified schools.

As the ISP began, the project director was its political advocate. Supported by the superintendent and directors of participating organizations, she was the individual primarily responsible for promoting the project and establishing connections. The ISP coordinator, though not involved in the project from the beginning, was the single most important influence on the success of the project and its activities. She established an effective rapport with agency directors, principals, and staffs. Her work was noted by almost all participants as the glue holding the collaborative together and the force enabling it to move forward. The ISP coordinator has an especially keen knack for knowing when to push an issue and when to back off, letting someone else handle the situation. So far, advocacy with the participating partners has been effective.

Implementation

The successful implementation of the ISP involved solving problems at each of the school sites by adapting planned activities to the realities of the setting. It also involved a somewhat changed role for the steering committee, which was reflected in changes in its composition. The following section addresses the issues confronted during implementation and how they were addressed. The section is organized in two parts. The first focuses on the steering committee and how it changed. The second addresses problems encountered at each school and how the ISP adjusted its activities to solve the problems.

Steering Committee

In the two years that the steering committee met prior to receipt of EPP funding, its membership comprised high-level decisionmakers from the participating organizations. For example, the superintendent of schools and the chief executive officers of local not-for-profit social service organizations were members of the steering committee, as were the director of the Welfare Department, the director of public health, and the heads of key departments in the CU Schools of Medicine and Education. Once the partnership began operating, the steering committee grew to include individuals responsible for providing service at the school sites. Nurses from the school-based clinics, welfare caseworkers, and social workers from the university participated in the steering committee.

The original conception of the steering committee was that it would allocate resources and services. However, as problems were encountered at school sites, participating personnel expressed the desire for an opportunity to meet with the decisionmakers so they could express their concerns and work as part of a team to resolve the problems. The change of the steering committee from a policymaking to operational body was reinforced by staff development. The ISP addressed the issues of interorganizational collaboration by providing staff development to the steering committee. The professional development activities included some cross training, in which teachers learned the work of social workers and vice versa. This professional development increased participants' understanding of each other and the issues each must face. In addition, the cross training, coupled with the discussions among participants, led to some changes in services at the school level. The most notable of these changes was that social workers at Padres Middle School offered instruction in group dynamics to students.

The move from the policy focus to an operational focus had some costs. For example, accommodating welfare services at schools involved not only space allocation and additional telephone lines at the school sites, but also interaction with school personnel and the resolution of issues related to confidentiality. Simultaneously, the Welfare Department faced changes in how cases were assigned to workers and adaptations to the computer system. The operationally oriented steering committee was well able to deal with issues related to interaction, but policy decisions were required to address computer compatibility and case assignment. In the absence of an arena for discussions of how policy changes in case assignment might affect potential expansion of the ISP, the Welfare Department dealt with the problem unilaterally. This solution was successful throughout the term of the project, but begged the more basic question. Similarly, the issue of computer compatibility was addressed within the Welfare Department, and there was no discussion of the costs and benefits of ensuring that medical and school records were compatible with the welfare records.

On the positive side, the inclusion of service providers allowed difficult issues to be resolved. Perhaps the most difficult problem confronting the ISP was that the various service providers have different perspectives—and professional obligations—with regard to confidentiality. The foundation of understanding and trust built through work and steering committee meetings was the basis of the agreement that the health profession's policy of maintaining patient confidentiality would prevail. As a result, school administrators had minimal information about particular students and their situations, and required the administrators and health service providers to trust one another and their institutions. As various confidentiality issues arose, school administrators and other participants in the ISP shared information appropriately—and to all participants' satisfaction.

School-Site Implementation

All schools faced the problem of providing space for the new services. The on-site coordinators, parent coordinator, social workers, caseworkers, and health professionals required space and resources to do their jobs. Because the ISP wanted the new services integrated into the day-to-day activities on campus, school principals made an effort to find space accessible to students, faculty, staff, and families.

The ISP supported a site coordinator at each school. The coordinator facilitated, coordinated, and communicated across institutions. Site coordinators were an immediate resource for all participants. The on-site coordinators were supported by the ISP coordinator, who interacted with both policymakers and service delivery personnel. The ISP coordinator identified common problems and helped people find their own solutions.

Each school presented different challenges to implementing the ISP, arising from differences in the ages of students, school demographics, prior experience with similar programs, and the culture of each school. As the challenges were addressed, the ISP adapted to each setting. The following section is organized according to the school site.

Dodger Elementary School

The Dodger Elementary School principal was willing to confront the challenges presented by the highly mobile school population. She welcomed the ISP and its services.

Perhaps because of her support, but also because of the age of the students, many aspects of the ISP were very successful at Dodger. For example, it was the most successful site for welfare services. The caseworker and on-site coordinator immediately established an effective working relationship. Additionally, the caseworker established rapport with most of the school staff, creating a comfortable environment for providing services.

The social workers took on an additional role at Dodger. As originally planned, the social workers counseled students who were referred to them. Each referral was discussed in a weekly ISP meeting at the school. According to the social workers, the weekly meetings facilitated communication among personnel from participating organizations. In addition to counseling, the social workers taught classes to fifth- and sixth-grade students that focused on group behavior. In part, the classes were a replacement for conflict resolution activities that were implemented in the other schools. The CCR believed that the types of services they provided were inappropriate for young children, but school staff felt strongly that some activities that addressed positive behavior in groups was needed, particularly in a school with high mobility. An added benefit from the teaching was the increased exposure of the social workers to the faculty, staff, and students of the school. As a result, teachers and other staff were comfortable referring students to the social workers for counseling. Through ongoing interaction with faculty and staff, the social workers were able to inform teachers and staff about behavior that may indicate problems that could be dealt with appropriately in counseling.

At Dodger, the parent coordinator's position changed over time. At first, the parent coordinator's primary duties were related to teaching and coordinating social services. This role entailed making home visits and coordinating social services for families. For example, the parent coordinator facilitated housing assistance, enabling families to remain in their homes and the children to remain at Dodger. Once the social workers began providing counseling, the parent coordinator increased her focus on services for parents. With the help of the on-site coordinator, parent activities were coordinated with existing programs, such as the PTA and Chapter 1. The parent coordinator became responsible for monthly parenting workshops sponsored by the PTA and field trips that were part of the Chapter 1 program.

The elementary school chose not to have a medical clinic on site. Instead, health services at Dodger focused on health education and school entry exams for kindergarten students, as requested by parents. Even so, school personnel and the on-site coordinator found it difficult to persuade families to come to school for their children's exams. School personnel attributed the low turnout for exams to the unease parents felt in the school environment.

Padres Middle School

The principal and assistant principal at Padres Middle School also welcomed the ISP. The school staff had been deeply involved in restructuring activities and, according to the assistant principal, believed that support services would provide needed help to students. With such help, they thought, students would be better able to concentrate on academic matters.

The school rearranged the nurse's and counselors' offices to accommodate the provision of health services. Although the rooms were not private because fire department regulations prevented full closure to the ceiling, the doctors adjusted by doing such things as playing the radio during private conversations so others could not overhear.

Much of the success of the middle school clinic was attributed to the work of the on-site coordinator and the nurse practitioner. Often, the health clinic was the initial point of contact for students, and frequently they were referred from the clinic to another service, such as counseling.

Despite support from the staff, the parent coordinator initially was unsure of how to provide parenting services to middle school children. She decided to coordinate a sibling group for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders, which provided information about baby-sitting. Over the course of the year, about half the sixth-grade students regularly attended the course, which was held during lunch.

Padres Middle School was the site of the most successful conflict resolution program. The conflict resolution program was tailored to individual student needs and was one of a menu of services offered to students referred for assistance. The conflict resolution activities were most useful for conflicts with parents or other caregivers.

Giant High School

The ISP had the most difficult time implementing programs at the high school. In part, this reflected the more difficult issues raised by adolescents. For example, health clinics faced the problem of providing contraceptives at the high school, an issue that did not arise at the other schools. In addition, there were project-specific problems at the school.

Giant High School was the last school to hire an on-site coordinator because of differences between the principal and the ISP coordinator about the type of person who would best fill the job. In addition to the slow start, the on-site coordinator found it difficult to fit into the structure of the high school. Consequently, communication in the high school was difficult. The number of counselors and assistant principals created a maze for the on-site coordinator to navigate. Additionally, the health clinic's operation at the high school predated the ISP and had established processes for referrals. Integrating established and new roles and structures made it difficult for the coordinator to facilitate ISP activities at the high school.

Three programs were successful at the high school. First, the school health clinic was already established at Giant so space and facility issues did not arise. Partly because other counseling services were available through the ISP, the principal was willing for the clinics to dispense contraceptives, although he wanted little publicity about it. The medical staff continued to operate as it had prior to the ISP and worked independently from other ISP staff.

Second, the social workers dealt with very serious counseling problems at Giant. Four students were hospitalized. Other students had problems related to AOD abuse and violent crimes.

Third, the parent coordinator sponsored a parenting course for pregnant and parenting students. Although the target population was young women, fathers and fathers-to-be occasionally participated. Approximately 40 students were part of the parent group. Speakers and workshops were coordinated with other social service agencies, and services were provided to students on campus. Fathers and fathers-to-be were referred to a service provider sponsoring an off-campus group specifically designed for teen fathers.

Neither the conflict resolution program nor the placement of welfare services at Giant worked very well. Giant High School had the highest truancy rate in the CPS. School administrators and staff from the CCR believed that conflict resolution techniques would be helpful in resolving conflicts (with parents, relatives, teachers, or other students) that hinder regular school attendance. However, the high school staff and faculty were unwilling to participate, and staff from CCR were unwilling to change their approach. Consequently, the program was underused. After a year, school staff decided to focus on students who were developing a truancy problem rather than the "hard-core" students. Staff seemed willing to work with the less hostile students. At the same time, CCR staff indicated willingness to modify their techniques to fit with the setting.

The environment at Giant was less supportive for the welfare caseworkers as compared to other schools. Three caseworkers were located at the high school from the beginning of the project. However, until the on-site coordinator was hired, there was no liaison with school administrators and other participants in the ISP. In addition, the computer equipment at the high school was slightly different from the computer the caseworkers used at the office, so the caseworkers experienced some problems. Further, the computer did not always work. When the coordinator came on board, some problems were eliminated, but both school administrators and ISP staff agree that more efforts were needed to integrate the caseworkers into the high school.

Impact

The ISP was affected by congressional action that cut funding to the EPP. As a result, the partnership received funds for a shorter period of time than anticipated. Nonetheless, the ISP achieved notable impacts on the participating institutions.

Perhaps most important, the ISP moved from conversation to action. EPP funding enabled individuals representing organizations that provide services to children and families to try out ideas that they had embraced. They found that doing was harder than talking, but that it was possible to overcome problems and work together. For example, school personnel were more willing to risk community reaction to providing contraception because of the support they received from others in the ISP. Similarly, the Welfare Department changed the methods they used to assign clients to caseworkers in order to facilitate school-based services. And, social workers saw an educational as well as a counseling component of their job.

The ISP served literally hundreds of children and families, providing parent education, health services, counseling, and conflict resolution. At least one suicide was prevented, according to health workers. Severely troubled students received services in a timely way.

Despite these outcomes, the ISP lasted too short a time to tell whether such integrated services help preserve families, encourage students to complete school, or increase overall health. Perhaps more important, the ISP operates with a focus on children in need, rather than on the system changes that might place fewer children in such circumstances.

Institutionalization

Although ISP partners never assumed outside funding always would be present, they were surprised at Congress's failure to fund the EPP. Consequently, the steering committee was faced with decisions about hard money support during the early implementation of the ISP, before results could be known. Decisions about continued support were made by each participating organization, and the levels of commitment varied, depending on whether participation was simply a reallocation of resources or required new resources. The medical school decided to continue its services at the school-based health clinics, and the Welfare Department also committed to maintaining caseworkers at the school sites. For both organizations, participation simply meant assigning staff to different locales, with no major additional expenses. CPS agreed to provide continuing support for a coordinator but not for school site coordinators or other staff, including the parent coordinator.

One year after the EPP funding ended, the ISP existed in the three schools and additional schools may be added. However, the focus remains on individual children rather than on systemwide change. Further, the steering committee no longer meets. Like many of the EPP projects, the ISP has institutionalized a number of activities, but has not institutionalized the partnership.

Conclusion

Activities originally sponsored by the ISP continue to provide important services to students and their families. However, the services are not integrated in the way originally envisioned. That is, each organization serves students and their families according to its own guidelines, and referrals to other services exist as they did before the ISP. Because school site coordinators are no longer in place, no one is responsible for ensuring that families receive the full range of services that would help them. Even more important, the focus on individual children provides no impetus for organizations to work together in ways that might prevent the need for such support. As generally described, integrated service projects not only assist those in need, they work with schools and others to change their actions so they attend increasingly to prevention rather than treatment.

Despite its shortcomings, many of which may be attributed to the abrupt end of funding, the ISP provides several lessons to other partnerships. First, it demonstrates that many barriers to collaboration can be overcome with time, the appropriate structures, and commitment. ISP members were able to accept different approaches to confidentiality in a way that validated involvement in the collaborative and served students and their families. Second, the ISP illustrates the need to adjust project policies and procedures to adapt to each site, whether based in schools or other organizations. Although the project adhered to general principles, particular applications varied according to the history and culture of the location. In the ISP, when participants were rigid about their approaches, as was the CCR in the first year, little was accomplished. Third, the ISP shows that truly integrated services are difficult to deliver, but that coordinated service delivery accomplishes a great deal. Finally, the ISP is an example of a partnership that required external funding to get moving but was able to survive even an unexpected loss of outside money.

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Storefront School Partnership

Introduction

The Storefront School partnership (SS) is an example of applying the concept of educational partnership to an important and persisting problem. Many school districts, particularly in urban areas, are confronted by high numbers of students who drop out of school. If, as dropouts and others frequently claim, it is the institution of "school" itself that is a barrier to success for such students, alternative settings may provide a way to "reclaim" these young people. Further, many dropouts need social and health supports as well as an alternative setting. Consequently, the SS provides a model of a partnership serving a challenging clientele.

The SS extends several lessons for partnership development:

- Organizational mavericks may be the source of creative and meaningful programs, but they need support to strengthen and improve the program.
- A shared vision and deep commitment among partners can help overcome weaknesses in program design and implementation.
- Even with confusion about how the partnership structure relates to the program, the partnership itself can be institutionalized.

The Storefront School combines the resources of the City School District, the local franchise of a nationwide fast-food chain and several other private businesses in the community, and local public organizations and agencies, among them, the city health department and a shelter for homeless youth. The project provides employment and academic and life skills to adolescents who have dropped out of school. The youth served have not been enrolled in any school for at least six months. Though their stories vary, they share a stark reality. Most do not live in a traditional home setting with parents. Many live with foster families or with other youth, independent of any adult authority or supervision. Many of the adolescents are themselves parents. Some are homeless and live transient lives, moving from shelter to shelter. The harsh climate in the state makes this situation even more difficult to endure. Many of the youth have been victims of various forms of abuse. Others have never received guidance in any form. Without assistance, most of the youth to be served by the project have a poor prognosis for a satisfying and productive life.

The partnership established an alternative school where students receive computer-assisted instruction to increase basic skills in reading, mathematics, and language to the level necessary for entry-level employment. A life skills course provides a setting in which students explore their choices and behavior. Students also have opportunities for in-depth vocational exploration. The project has changed the lives of many students who most likely never would have returned to school and in many cases had hit bottom emotionally, spiritually, and financially.

Context

The SS is located in the largest city in a rural, northeastern state. The city struggles with urban issues such as homelessness, AOD abuse, runaways, crime, and high unemployment. Several individuals interviewed for this case study stated that many people live isolated lives, with few family members or other supports nearby. The director of a social service agency working with the SS believed that, "The lack of family has caused emotional and spiritual problems for many."

For a number of years, jobs in the state were abundant and lucrative. However, as in many other parts of the country, the recession hit the state and the city hard. And funds once available for public programs, including public education, are no longer coming in. Public and private sector institutions are cutting back in personnel and programs because of budget decreases and deficits.

The school itself is housed in a downtown shopping area that was once the site of upscale stores. The street now has many vacant stores, which enabled the owner to donate space to the SS. The property manager said that the school would be replaced by a retail outlet if anyone expressed interest. He also said that he did not think the space would be leased very soon.

The project director and one of the teaching staff previously had worked together on an after-school project with at-risk students at a local high school. They had brainstormed about an alternative to traditional intervention efforts. The project director, who is a teacher at the SS, applied for a number of grants before the EPP and generated interest in what became the partnership project. The staff member with whom he had brainstormed was included in the grant. The project director also had previous contact with an employee of one of the largest companies in the state, who had assisted the school district by conducting employability training for students. The company became the first business partner for the SS.

In response to the challenges offered by the population served, the school district sponsored a number of alternative programs for students placed at risk. Consequently, it is not surprising that a project such as the SS was supported at the district level.

The vision, which was to create a program in which dropout youth could complete their high school graduation requirements or be supported in returning to a regular high school program, continued to grow as it was shared with partners and other business alliances. All partners agreed upon activities designed to reach the vision. The singular focus of the project made it easy to maintain the vision clearly, which seemed to support rapid full implementation of the project.

Initiation

The SS began with the application for EPP funding. The project director, at that time a high school teacher, prepared a draft of the proposal. While doing so, he engaged in conversations with a number of business and community leaders, most notably the president of a franchise operation, as well as representatives from the health department and the youth shelter. He also identified the space for the program and was the proposed project director.

During the first year of the project, the school district was the grant recipient, administering the project through its curriculum office. Partners included in the proposal fulfilled their obligations, with the health department providing regular health screenings and working closely with pregnant and parenting students to ensure that they and their children received proper medical care. The health department also assisted young mothers in finding day care for their children. The business partners provided participating students with orientation to the world of work, and, to some extent, helped students find part-time jobs. And, the homeless shelter referred students to the program.

There were a few start-up problems, but, for the most part, the opening of the school was smooth. Students were identified quickly. The teaching staff comprised the project director and his colleague. Further, the grant included funding for a secretarial position, and the SS was fortunate in the decision of an experienced and nurturing woman to transfer to the program. Her rapport with students was excellent, and she developed and maintained a record-keeping system. Because of her close ties with the community, she was notified frequently of part-time jobs, which she shared with the students. On the other hand, the refitting of the store to meet code standards was more difficult and expensive than envisioned. Although the materials for the refitting were donated by a business, qualified workers were required by the municipal and educational code to meet student safety requirements. The SS began without serving the meals it promised, although when the building was complete, both breakfast and lunch were prepared and served by students and staff.

At the start, the SS had a board of directors that included representatives from the health department, the youth shelter, the school district, and the franchise. However, it met infrequently, and decisions were made by the project director and the school district. The health department had envisioned a somewhat larger service role and was moderately disappointed in its inability to influence the operation of the SS.

Leadership of the project was a problematic area at the start of the SS. The project director, who had been the major advocate for and implementer of the project, also was responsible for teaching. As project director, he viewed his role also as administrator of the project, which was not the district's intention, and he had problems fulfilling all his obligations.

Implementation

The SS moved quickly into full implementation, addressing problems as they became clear. Further, although the focus of the partnership never altered, there were changes in the structure of the partnership and the roles that partners and staff played. This section begins with a discussion of the partnership structure, including how it changed over time. It then moves to an analysis of the program offered by the SS and its changes.

Partnership Structure

The SS partnership is moderately complex. There are multiple partners from both the public and private sectors. The project itself is an alternative, "last chance" school that gives high school-age students who have been out of school for at least six months the opportunity to receive their high school diploma in a nonthreatening, nurturing setting. Students are encouraged to and often assisted in finding employment during participation in the project.

During the first year of the project, the school district was the grant recipient, but in the second year of the partnership grant, the board of directors formed a not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation, affiliated with a national community-based program. Although the school district remained responsible for the educational program offered to students, policy decisions about other matters were, at least theoretically, in the hands of the partners. The formation of the SS Board of Directors was designed to ensure greater participation of businesses and other agencies in the project as a whole. Previously, participation was limited to organizations attending only to the components of the project to which they were directly linked. However, members of the board expressed confusion about their role and, with a few exceptions, did not take an active role in program governance. Most believed the educational component to be the most important part of the SS and thought that it was well run so their input was not needed. At least two members of the board were concerned that the SS was a "secret," and hoped that board members would become involved in raising funds to support activities supplementary to the educational program.

Membership of the board of directors includes representation from the franchise, the school district, the health department, three large local businesses, and the property manager. The youth shelter, which is still involved with SS activities, lost representation on the board when its executive director left the agency. Although both the SS and shelter staff members agree that a replacement should be appointed, the policies and procedures for doing so are not well established.

An executive committee, much like a working council, was established and meets once or twice a month. Attendance at these meetings is consistently high. The board of directors convenes quarterly, with some members attending regularly and others never attending. The executive committee is attempting to establish a board in which all members attend the quarterly meetings and also take an active role in decisionmaking and policymaking. Project staff provide a quarterly report to the board of directors.

The board itself is still growing and learning about its responsibilities and tasks. One member saw the board's role as follows:

> Our role is to be a mentor to the program. We come in and speak to kids on the importance of filling out an application, how to do resumes, interviewing, what qualities companies are looking for. I think that our intentions are that we will employ kids from the SS. We are interested in people because we are in the people business, and because we are interested in the quality of life for the people in the state....We are one of the largest private employers in the state....I think that carries a little bit of clout when we go in and talk to these kids in that we would take the time to talk to them and I think that makes them feel good.

Another board member was sent to a week-long training session sponsored by the national community-based organization to find out more about what the board should be doing to garner public support and administer the project. In commenting on her attendance, a third board member noted:

> She [the board member who attended the training] returned with many new ideas and a much better perspective on the types of issues we should be dealing with as a board. As more board members are willing to take an active role in governance, the leadership within the board will become more of a collaboration than it has been up to this point.

One partner felt that not enough recognition had been given to his or her company. However, she never attended any meetings during which this issue could be discussed.

Several new members have joined the SS in the last year, including a marketing consultant. In addition, the school secretary serves as board secretary and represents the SS staff.

Perhaps the area of greatest concern has been the leadership of program operations. As noted above, the impetus for the SS came from a teacher, whose ideas were supported by a colleague. He garnered the needed support for the program and was key to preparing the proposal to OERI. However, from the school district's perspective, he was most suited to teaching the students and did not attend adequately to administrative details. Consequently, the district appointed a principal to the school, who was to serve as administrator for the project. The individual appointed as principal, however, had numerous other duties and both he and the project director agreed that insufficient time was being devoted to the SS.

Although both the school district administrator and the project director agreed that there was a problem with administration of the SS, they disagreed about how best to address it. From the project director's perspective, it was appropriate for him to advocate for the SS whenever possible. The school administrator believed that the district's commitment to the SS was strong, and that advocacy was unnecessary. These differences created some friction. However, by the end of the third year of the SS, a new principal was appointed to supervise the educational program. She also was principal of an alternative school and was able to spend at least one day a week at the storefront. Consequently, much of the confusion regarding individual roles and responsibilities within the project has been clarified. The present configuration, although still evolving, seems to be acceptable to all concerned.

Activities

The activities of the partnership are fairly straightforward, maintaining the clear and common vision held from the outset of the project. The project offers computer-assisted learning opportunities. In addition, teaching staff provide guidance in students' use of the computer-based program classes in building self-esteem, English, and social science, and also facilitate an AOD support group. Employability skills training conducted by one of the business partners also is available to students. All staff act as counselors and document issues much like case managers. Each staff member is responsible for students in his or her group.

28

Other services are offered by the SS. Free breakfast and lunch are provided by the project, and students and staff share in meal preparation. Tutoring is provided to students based on a request or need. The staff, supplemented by volunteers, organize many field trips. The SS regularly hosts speakers from the community.

From the start, the SS was able to recruit sufficient numbers of students. The school district sent letters to juniors and seniors who were enrolled in school in September and were no longer in school in February. Collaborating agencies such as the youth shelter and other local service organizations also were apprised of the project. Initial responses came from parents and students calling for more information. The staff interviewed students before accepting them to ensure that they would be serving youth who were able to work in the flexible setting of the storefront. The project began with 26 students in spring 1991. Since then, referrals have come also from the juvenile hall, participating students, and the health department.

Students seeking enrollment in the project have to be out of school for a minimum of one semester before they are eligible for participation. According to one staff member:

> We're not a transfer school. We have a good school district as far as safety nets for students at risk of dropping out. They've got to go through the process, go to the other alternative schools that might meet their needs better. And then, if there's nothing else, that's what we're here for.

The students enrolled in the project are unique in a number of ways besides having been out of school for a minimum of one semester. Many have gone through several phases going from regular school to an alternative school (other than the SS), and then dropping out. To label these students as dropouts or failures in the education system would do them a great injustice. Their histories from difficult home environments and teenage pregnancies (the 60 students in the project collectively have 22 children among them) to AOD abuse problems have contributed to their current situation. This, however, has not prevented about one third of the students in the project from receiving their diplomas or GEDs and going on to lead much more productive lives than many cynics would have believed possible. The life experiences of the students in many cases have been extremely difficult; they found success, however, in the project. The following are some brief examples of students who have participated in the SS. (Facts have been merged to maintain anonymity of individual students.)

- One student moved from a small remote community to live with a family member in the city. Motivations behind the move are unknown, but for some reason, the student did not enroll in any school after moving to the city. The student eventually entered the SS and received his diploma soon thereafter. He enlisted in the army and expressed an interest in continuing his education through the army. He requested that a copy of his diploma be faxed to his town so that everyone would know he had graduated. He was the first member of his family to graduate from high school.

- One teenage runaway who had dropped out in another state ended up living with her sister in the city after drifting around the country for some time. After several months out of school and out of work, she enrolled in the SS with the encouragement of her sister. She spent one semester at the SS and received her diploma. She is now going to college.

- One 18-year-old with two children enrolled in the SS and spent half the day in the storefront and the other half at her job. One staff member commented that the student was "very responsible but had minimal parenting from home. She never learned how to say no or when not to get into certain situations." She is expected to receive her diploma soon.

The stories go on and on, each with its own twist. Most students come from homes that cope daily with poverty. Many have problems dealing with their anger. Authority figures of any kind are perceived as threats by many students. Many of the students in the project have suffered from parental neglect and indifference. The staff members in the project demonstrate their care for the students and are willing to draw boundaries. For example, one student, who had been bothering other students and staff, was asked to leave for the day. He subsequently went outside and wrote a profane statement on the windows. He was brought back in and told that the behavior was completely unacceptable, that he was to wash the statement off the windows immediately and apologize to his fellow students and to the staff. He complied with all these requests and went back to his schoolwork. He is expected to graduate soon.

The storefront itself is fairly informal and flexible. Students are required to be present at the school a minimum of four hours per day. Also, they may not be absent more than 15 days in one semester. Other than these strictly monitored and enforced requirements, students have the freedom to schedule their own school days and work at their own pace. Participating students need 21 credits to graduate. They have options in this area as well. They can complete the required credits at the SS, take the GED, or receive a regular diploma, which requires them to take some type of advanced level courses to demonstrate that they have the skills to pass a college level class.

The SS offers one semester credit for 60 hours at the school. Generally, students receive credit for their presence, though staff members monitor students' progress on the computer programs and provide ongoing counseling. No letter grades are given to the work completed by the students on the computers.

The school also operates a Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) program through the city's Department of Labor. The program meets during the summer for approximately two months and includes courses in preemployability skills, nutrition, and physical education. It is an activity-oriented instructional program and involves youths who are not participating in the SS during the regular school year.

From an educational perspective, the curriculum offered through computer-assisted instruction lacks rigor. The newly appointed principal believes that her greatest contribution can be made in the area of curriculum and instruction. She said:

> The SS's focus on building self-esteem and helping students define and live within limits is absolutely appropriate. It works. But there's no reason that the schoolwork kids study can't be of high quality as well. They can get self-esteem by knowing a lot, too.

She regularly devotes time in staff meetings to discussions of learning objectives as well as social objectives. She intends to strengthen the curriculum, especially in the areas of social studies and science, through using more hands-on materials. She also is researching other software to augment or replace the computer learning system now in place.

The concept of school as a brick school building with bells ringing marking the beginning and end of classes, with set rosters and schedules, and governed by many rules and regulations has been altered by the SS. The SS began, according to the initiator, because the students he worked with, all "failing" school, believed that the atmosphere itself was part of their problem. In the SS, each student decides his or her own schedule as well as the pace at which students work and the level at which they begin. The only strict requirement is a cap on the number of absences per semester.

The SS also takes a much more holistic approach to students and attends to needs that go beyond their academic education. Small class size, individualized attention and counseling, and a self-esteem building course are offered by the SS and are not generally offered at a "regular" high school. Also, because of the small number of students who participate, staff members are able to monitor closely both academic and personal growth of students and intervene when necessary.

The freedom the SS is allowed from the district is due in part to its independent status as a not-for-profit organization subsidized by a number of public and private entities. The project's principal hopes to keep it that way and although he needs support from the district for salaries, he does not want the project to become "just another district program."

Impact

The impact of the SS on staff and students has been great. Further, at least some participating businesses and social agencies report changes as a result of their work with the SS. The community in general, however, has been unaffected by the partnership. Each of these groups will be discussed in turn in the following section.

Educational Staff

The SS's educational staff members have opportunities to work with students in fairly unconventional ways. At the SS, teachers enjoy a certain amount of autonomy in structure and content of their courses, and are free to alter them as they see fit. As one staff member put it:

> I really like the direction this school is taking. I like the freedom. I like being able to see this isn't working and change it much faster here than you could within a larger system. Change is so much slower for a good reason with that many people [as in the regular high schools].

Staff members also meet regularly both formally and informally to plan and discuss students, events and activities, and curricula. Teachers know what other teachers are working on in their classes; thus, there is a high degree of articulation across courses. Because of the small number of students in the school, teachers also are much more aware of each student's individual growth and progress, both academic and personal. Another staff member said:

> Staff members try to meet at least three times a week. With a small staff, that's possible. We have a month to plan together before the kids are even here. Some weeks, we meet every day to keep everyone informed of what's going on.

This esprit de corps among the staff in the project builds a cohesive team that works together toward a commonly shared vision. In regular schools, visions and goals are much less apparent and often are not shared by all. This can result in fragmented activities with individuals working toward individual goals. The high degree of cooperation among project staff supports the SS's goals and objectives, and undoubtedly has had a direct impact on its success.

Students

Most SS students very likely would never have returned to any school were it not for the project. The SS has had much success in motivating students to go on to community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities. Twelve students, after completing their graduation requirements at the SS or returning to a regular high school to graduate, have continued their education at various institutions of higher education, a noteworthy accomplishment considering these students had not been enrolled in any school for at least six months prior to enrolling in the SS. Several students we spoke with had been out of school for two to three years.

Most students who enrolled in the SS did not complete their graduation requirements at the storefront. A few returned to regular high schools. Other students exited the SS for a variety of reasons including pregnancy, employment, running away, and personal problems. The program's policy does, however, consider the difficult circumstances under which these students live, and if students find they are unable to assume responsibility for their commitment to the project, they may withdraw and return when they are again ready. The number of times a student may reenter the SS is unclear and as far as we know, there is no policy in place that addresses this issue. Some students have left and returned as many as four times.

Since April 1992, 16 students have received their state-approved high school diplomas, 23 received their GEDs, and 14 returned to a regular high school program. Five SS graduates have gone on to institutions of higher education and 7 have gone on to trade schools.

The project also had an impact on the number of credits students earned. The majority of SS students for whom data were available had earned 2.5 or fewer credits in the year prior to SS enrollment, though some had earned from 2.75 to 6.25 credits. After enrollment at the SS, the number or credits earned by these students increased. A quarter of the students earned 6.5 credits or more (none of them had earned this many credits in the year prior to enrollment at the SS). Overall, students were earning more credits at the SS than they had at their last school of enrollment.

In a survey administered by the district's evaluation department, participating students were asked about their attitudes toward the project. All students responded that they liked the project. All but one student believed that what they were learning at the SS would help them to be successful in the future. In addition, all respondents agreed that the SS made it easier for them to stay in school and that they liked the way they were treated in the project.

Participating Organizations

The impact on participating organizations varied according to the extent to which they became actively involved in the partnership at the governance, planning, or activity level. It was clear that the SS had less impact on the organizations than vice versa. This is not to say that the partners were not affected by their involvement with the project but more a commentary on the difficulty businesses have making real changes when getting involved with schools.

For businesses that previously had worked with the school system, the SS had little impact on their operations. The human resources department of one of the larger companies in the area had a history of conducting job employability skills training. When the SS requested the company's help in this area, it was very willing to offer these services. This, however, did not alter the way this large company operated. Although the large company did not hire students, a smaller company has put a policy in place to give SS students priority for hiring.

Business partners also can learn about opportunities for educational involvement from the partnership. One of the primary business partners, a large franchise, became actively involved in the partnership after the partnership project director inquired about the opportunities the national franchisers offered for sponsorship of academies. Contacts at the local chain did not know about this opportunity. When they called the national headquarters, they received the information and became enthusiastic about the idea. The local franchise has been a strong advocate ever since. Involvement in the partnership led the company to explore opportunities for involvement in education they did not know even existed. Thus, the partnership had a considerable impact on the organization.

The partnership had less impact on the health department because of the department's previous work at the school level. One great difference was the inclusion of the department on the partnership board. As part of the governing body, the health department had input on issues it might not ordinarily have been privy to in a regular school/health department relationship. From the beginning of their involvement with the partnership, representatives from the health department were very enthusiastic about developing the SS into a comprehensive project that would address not only students' academic needs but also their health needs. Unfortunately, when health department contacts explored the possibility of setting up a health clinic in the school, they quickly came up against school district/community politics. The fear that the health clinic might touch upon controversial topics such as abortion, birth control, and HIV education impeded progress toward establishing the clinic on school premises. One individual we spoke with stated:

> When I see [the health department] coming on, I would like to see them have an office right here [at the school]. I'd like to see someone here full time....Our school districts wouldn't dare give a kid a condom, but they'll entertain the idea of providing child care. It amazes me. Kids are walking around with diseases that are going to kill them before they are even sure of how they got the disease. You are not going to solve that problem by sticking a bag over your head and ignoring that the problem is there.

The health department had to learn to deal with political issues surrounding education and attempted to work within that environment.

The youth shelter, which started with representation on the board and then lost it when its executive director changed positions, was affected by the partnership in that the services it provided could be used by its clientele. Because the shelter deals mainly with transient youth, it found it very difficult to find appropriate means to get these young people back into a school environment, even into the alternative schools. The storefront's proximity to the shelter and the more independent, nontraditional school environment made it an ideal setting for the population it served. Thus, the SS filled a gap in the system. There were now activities in place to which shelter clientele could be referred. However, there was no impact on the shelter's policies and practices.

The Community

The community at large was not greatly affected by the partnership. For those directly involved, the impact of the SS on participating students was perceived as well worth the partners' efforts. The project itself has not received a lot of notoriety, partly because the board of directors wanted to be able to report concrete positive student outcomes before going out into the community with the "good" news. As the SS develops and more and more successes are noted, the partnership is sure to gain attention from the media, if those at the governance level make this goal a priority.

The SS could decrease the number of dropout youth who fall outside of the system and steer them in the direction of becoming productive individuals. The project already has demonstrated that it can do this. Sixteen project participants have received state-approved high school diplomas and of these, five have gone on to institutions of higher education and seven for further technical training. One partner believed that the SS should be more active in informing the community about its success:

> You have to be organized enough to have a strategic plan and have goals, objectives, document your successes, let them know what's been happening, who you have been recognized by [e.g., Chamber of Commerce best and most worthwhile program award], what you model after, what's going on nationally, or why this kind of a program [works] and what it can do for the city.

Institutionalization

The SS has been fully institutionalized. The school district has pledged continuing support to the educational program, including paying for the teachers and continuing to seek funds that can provide the necessary supplementary services. Similarly , the health department plans to continue to provide health related services as well as information about child care to SS students. Perhaps more notable, given the fact that members of the board of directors are unclear about their roles, is that the partnership structure also is institutionalized. Although other EPP projects created 501(c)3 not-for-profit organizations that are fairly inactive, the one created for the SS seems committed to finding a permanent role in the school and the community.

The following section begins with a discussion of the institutionalization of the partnership structure and then moves to an analysis of the institutionalization of the SS.

Partnership

The partnership as an entity has been institutionalized by gaining 501(c) (3) status as a not-for-profit organization. The principal serves as executive director and there is a board of directors, all of whom are dedicated to keeping the SS going. The board, as it matures, has the potential to continue seeking additional funding sources to expand the project and obtain new materials. But as one administrator stated:

> What we find is the private sector here in town is really willing to do a lot of in-kind things. That hard cash is hard to come by. We can get in-kind donations. For graduation, we've got one company coming in giving us free drinks, another is donating door prizes, [a service club] is donating the facility. We're paying for the food, but we're getting a deal. The community has been wonderful in working on the in-kind contributions. But we do have some needs for the hard cash for equipment, technology, and software upgrading.

When the term of EPP funding ended, all salaries were paid by the district. Thus, staff salaries are covered and overhead costs are subsidized by partners. Institutionalization in terms of maintaining the project as it now stands is complete. However, the principal and the board are not satisfied with mere maintenance. The principal has a plan of action to expand the project and sees a definite need to replicate it in other areas of the city. She is convinced that another location would be filled to capacity immediately. Added features such as child care, a full-time job coordinator position, the full-time presence of health and social services, and expanded curricula with more hands-on activities are included in the principal's expansion agenda.

Project Activities

Institutionalization of activities has occurred in that the school district perceives the SS as a viable educational alternative for youth who have left school. The rules and regulations for students demand a degree of self-discipline, but allow enough leeway for students to feel they are in a comfortable and nonthreatening environment.

There are, however, concerns regarding the overall curriculum, especially the computer software used by the students to advance from level to level in language arts and mathematics. Questions have been raised as to whether the software is rigorous enough to prepare students who eventually may wish to reenter a "regular" school. In addition, students are given credit solely for the number of hours they engage in these self-paced computer learning activities. Project staff monitor their progress only to the extent that the students advance from level to level at a satisfactory rate. Are these activities preparing students sufficiently for the demands of employers or institutions of higher education? At this point, this question is being raised by the school's administrator. No action has yet been taken on this issue as far as we know.

The employability skills training, offered throughout the year, continues to be conducted by one of the business partners through its human resources department. There is no sign that this activity will be decreased. The training is perceived by both students and staff as beneficial to students' futures.

The SS has been institutionalized at the district level with most staff salaries being paid by the district and student diplomas being issued through an agreement with an accredited high school in the district.

Conclusion

The success of the SS is due in part to the common vision shared by all partners and their participation or support for activities designed to achieve it. All remain dedicated to creating an educational setting in which dropout youth could complete their high school graduation requirements or be supported in returning to a regular high school program. The school district, business partners, and community agencies all agreed that some youth were falling through holes in the safety net already available in the district. The project was based on the needs of these students.

The district already had several programs seen as "alternatives" for students who were having difficulty in a regular school environment. The district already had showed a commitment to serving all students in a variety of ways, which paved the way for the SS because it was perceived as being able to fill some of the holes in the system.

The inclusion of prominent members of the business community from the beginning of the project gave it the boost it needed both financially and politically. The institutionalization of the project was aided further by being recognized as a part of the national community-based program. The financial support it received as a result should not be ignored.

The SS has made a definite impact on the school district. Its location is in itself an innovation. The school itself, although it may undergo changes in terms of curriculum and instruction, most likely will continue under the auspices of both the district (which pays most of the staff salaries) and the business partners. It has found a unique niche and meets the needs of a group of youth who otherwise would have no alternatives that would offer them the extra attention and motivation to keep them in school. In that respect, the school has made an enduring change in the system. One administrator agreed, saying:

> Lots of districts, including ours, have programs that intervene and try to keep kids from dropping out, but not too many districts have programs that say, "You can't come to this school unless you've dropped out. We want to get you back in the system." That's what makes it novel, so it's real important for us to have the data on it because I think it is a program that we can demonstrate on a national level as something to do and here are some of the things that work.

The SS worked, and continues to make a contribution to the community, despite a number of internal problems. For example, the initiator of the program, although able to create shared commitment to a vision, was less able to deal with managing the daily operations of the program.

Because commitment to the SS was widely shared, the school district and other partners developed solutions to the communication and operational problems that were developing as a result. Further, the first solution that the district tried, appointing a district administrator to supervise the SS, did not work. Despite the problems, persistence, attention to emerging concerns, and commitment enabled the SS to be successful.

School-To-Work Partnership

Introduction

Educational partnerships that assist students in making the transition from school to the world of work are among the most common and most successful of all partnerships. The School-to-Work partnership (STW), located in an inner suburb of a large metropolitan area, exemplifies such partnerships. The STW was successfully implemented and had positive impacts on students and participating organizations. The interorganizational arrangements were multifaceted and complex, but they built on prior professional relationships so difficulties were readily handled. Further, the project director created a vision of a program that would serve students with a wide range of characteristics, including those who were close to dropping out of school, average students, and gifted students. She identified appropriate staff, supported their efforts, and worked with them to solve problems as they emerged. Her focus on success was contagious, affecting all participants in the program. Perhaps as important, she did not avoid problems or criticize individuals who brought problems to her. Rather, she created an organizational culture that rewarded problem identification and problem solution.

This case was selected not only because it is a successful example of a common type of partnership, but also because of the lessons that can be drawn from it. They are:

- Leadership is critical in a complex partnership.
- Identifying and solving problems, using adaptive planning, contributes to success.
- Skilled and committed staff empowered to carry out partnership plans are an important element in project success.
- A complex partnership can be strengthened by breaking it down into components.

Brief Descripition

The STW provides vocational, academic, and support services to students in a metropolitan area. The partnership is managed by a county vocational/technical school (vo-tech) and includes seven school districts, businesses, community organizations, state agencies, local airports, four community and technical colleges (including an out-of-state postsecondary institution), five state universities, a local affiliate of the National Council on Aging (NCOA), and a rehabilitation training center. The partnership provides services to educationally and economically disadvantaged high school students. The targeted population includes students who are: gifted and talented, potential dropouts, pregnant and parenting teens, and receiving special education. The goal of the partnership is to increase high school completion rates and ensure successful transition to employment or further education.

Context

The partnership is located in a deteriorating inner suburban sector of a large metropolitan area. As one respondent said, "Our students murder and are murdered," a result of gang influence in the area. During the first two years of the STW, the economic recession affected employment opportunities greatly. This created a problematic environment for a school-to-work project. For example, one participating business reported no new hires for several years. Another of the most active local business partners expressed regret at being unable to hire one of the partnership students who had participated in job shadows at the work site because the position was eliminated.

Project staff responded to the worsening recession by expanding business-partner recruiting efforts. Staff also began to emphasize other business-partnership activities as local employers scaled down job-site training and job experience activities. The third year of the project developed within the context of economic transition as the local economy improved. This economic transition also brought about new circumstances that STW staff were quick to recognize as opportunities, further broadening the project in unanticipated directions.

The project director quoted a metropolitan newspaper in describing the area as "the antithesis of the American dream." The community is experiencing gang and other social problems. According to some, one of these problems is a disintegrated home life for the students. Project staff members and partners disagreed about parent interest in education; one cited a meeting in which only three parents attended, but another mentioned a series of activities involving 25 parents. The STW does not include parent-oriented activities; however, to participate in the project, each student had to have a parent or guardian attend an orientation and then formally sign a statement of understanding including both student and partnership roles and responsibilities. As the project grew, staff met 3,000 parents or guardians in person to obtain their signatures.

All partners referred to the county board of education as an important and supportive group. The board consists of one school board member from each of the school districts in the county. The absence of turf conflicts and protectionism was mentioned.

Several key participants in the STW had extensive relationships prior to the formal organization of the partnership. One participating community college, one participating state university, and the vocational/technical school had implemented successfully a "model articulation 2+2 project," in which staff in each institution had identified competencies that students would gain as a result of completion of a class. Once the competencies were identified, the institutions agreed to accept credits from one another. Another participating university placed practicum students, some of whom are now project staff, in the vo-tech school and collaborated with the school in a program designed to increase minority enrollment in the university. One of the largest business participants provided internships to vo-tech students prior to receiving funding. The rehabilitation center and the vo-tech school developed a "workability" program, which the partnership extended. The county employment services department also had an established relationship with the vo-tech school. These prior relationships led to the first of the formalized partnership agreements within the STW, establishing a strong initial partnership.

Initiation

The STW is a complex partnership, including numerous organizations and many activities. The vo-tech school, with its multischool-district consortium, originally partnered with the county employment services department, the Department of Rehabilitation, local businesses, and several community and state colleges and universities to form the STW. The partnership drew in the health department, public transportation agencies, an agency that serves the aging, and the county library during the second year. It added additional community-based organizations, including churches, in the third year.

The vo-tech school is governed by all school districts in the county. Students from the school districts, particularly those attending the continuation school, are eligible for project services. The vo-tech school also was the fiscal agent for the EPP grant. During the initial year of the project, projectwide decisionmaking was primarily administrative, and activity or project component coordinators had a great deal of autonomy but little direct understanding of the project as a whole, with all its activities and components. The governance and structure of the partnership changed as the partnership evolved and expanded.

All partners agreed on the need to find some means of addressing this educationally disadvantaged student population. Student focused, organizationally focused, and externally focused motives combine to energize this partnership project. Personal satisfaction also was mentioned as a motive of individual participants from different partner organizations.

The vo-tech school principal viewed the grant as "providing an opportunity to bring a lot of things we're doing together" and allowing additional development. Her focus is on students. That focus is shared by project staff and the college and university participants. In addition, the superintendent and the assistant superintendent share an externally focused political motivation. They see the partnership as a chance to gain community and national recognition. In their opinion, only such recognition will elevate vo-tech students from the position of "second-class citizens." The partnership is, thus, a political tool used in leveraging attention to the issues important to this student population.

There also are pragmatic motives for participation. For example, the employment services department is funded through an incentive formula based, in part, on the number of job placements it makes. When the STW places students in jobs in collaboration with the employment services department, the department receives additional funds. One pragmatic motivation for business participants is the tax credit they receive for employing rehabilitation clients. Business partners also expressed interest in expanding the qualified labor base. The principal of the opportunity school sees the partnership as a pragmatic means of "getting in on grant activities" and learning how to write grant applications. These reasons were given within longer responses that included the desire to serve students and provide them with needed programs.

Community colleges also have pragmatic as well as idealistic educational motivations. Within the last year, local community colleges have received funding for tech-prep program development, which gives them an incentive to become involved in the 2+2 articulations. As a result, the partnership articulation specialist has been able to expand the articulation agreements.

In addition, the community colleges see participation as a means of increasing their completion rates (traditionally 25 percent) because students who arrive having completed formalized preparation for specific paths of study are seen as more likely to finish the project.

Finally, some individual participants mentioned experiencing a strong sense of personal satisfaction. For example, this motivated an employee who had been a job-site tutor-mentor to request continued involvement following his own layoff.

Implementation

The STW has developed over the past three years. At its start, there was little collaborative work among partners, and the project steering committee was simply an arena for information sharing. Over time, the steering committee took on a greater role. Further, the number and types of organizations involved in the STW has grown, as have the number of students. This section begins with a description of STW activities, followed by a description of how the partnership structure changed during the course of implementation. It concludes with a brief view of how the developments unfolded, in order to give a sense of the adaptive planning used by project staff.

Partnership Activities

The STW activities are designed to provide vocational, academic, and support services to educationally and economically disadvantaged high school students. Activities are formed around the goal of helping students to complete high school and to make a successful transition to employment or further education. The four major components to the partnership are: vocational education, job-site experience, tutoring and mentoring, and support services. Each component has generated several activities.

Vocational Education

The county vo-tech school serves several high school districts. It provides vocational education and applied job skills in a variety of career areas. Articulation agreements were established based on the vocational courses offered at the vo-tech school to facilitate student progress along career paths that involve postsecondary vocational education.

The articulations are expressed in contracts with community colleges and four-year institutions that include formal credit-granting agreements. Thus, a student completing two years of vo-tech training that included articulated courses can attend two years at a community college (2+2), receiving some college credits for vocational work completed in high school. Where the career path is further articulated through the junior and senior college years, a four-year institution will accept the student transfer from the community college with articulation credits as well (2+2+2).

Currently, 300 articulation agreements are in operation. Seven institutions of higher education are involved in 2+2 agreements, and four in 2+2+2 agreements. Articulated career paths include those related to: aviation support services, automotive repair, business computer operations and applications, cabinetmaking, child care and guidance, computer-aided drafting and manufacturing, communications, construction, electronics, fashion merchandising and marketing, floral design, graphic arts and printing, job coaching, law enforcement, retail sales, transportation, and tutor training and guidance.

Job-Site Experience

Vocational education often takes place in conjunction with job-site experiences for the students. Students are able to see that workplaces use the same equipment they learn to use in the classroom. They also are able to gain familiarity with the work setting, employer expectations, and what the jobs they may be interested in are actually like. One means of doing this is through job shadowing experiences provided through the partnership. Students visit the workplace and observe (shadow) employees throughout the day. Internships, in which the student actually works in an entry-level job, also are provided through the partnership. Finally, students who complete the vo-tech program also may be placed in jobs related to their vocational training. The unemployment services department, providing access to job listings, is a great resource in helping the STW place graduated participants.

Tutoring and Mentoring

Students who are economically and educationally disadvantaged often need more than educational opportunities and job openings; they need to be prepared to meet these opportunities. Because many of these students have had behavioral or academic difficulty in school, tutoring, mentoring, and job coaching are provided through the partnership. The STW recognizes the challenge of providing this population with effective tutoring and mentoring. Consequently, partnership staff decided to train all tutors and mentors, be they peers, job-site employees, or other community members. In addition, tutors and students are carefully matched. All tutor-mentors fulfill the same roles, including general encouragement, homework help, and morale building. Primarily, they take an active interest in the student and hold the student accountable for school attendance and progress. In addition, they act as a feedback loop enabling staff to make teachers or counselors, or both, aware of relevant information concerning reasons for changes or persistent problems in student performance.

Peer tutor-mentors take a credit-earning tutor-training class at the vo-tech school. Many students are attracted to this training, and it has proven successful to match students placed at risk with trained tutor-mentors who also are at risk. Job-site tutor-mentors are employees who meet with students whether or not the student currently is shadowing or interning at the job site. Community volunteers also act as tutor-mentors, though to a lesser degree.

Job coaches are provided for students who need an on-the-job mediator during their initial involvement at the work site. These are students in a rehabilitation process of some kind, including those who have been deinstitutionalized and are on medication, and special education students. The job coach training program has developed beyond the needs of the partnership students. Job coaches also are now being hired by other local agencies, including some community-based organizations.

Tutor-mentoring was implemented as a support service, as a mechanism to closely track student progress, and as a means of increasing student attachment to school. Through continual tracking, the staff ensure that the tutor-tutee matches are appropriate.

Support Services

Students receive direct services addressing their particular needs. Students also receive indirect services in that vo-tech school and STW staff receive additional training to address the needs of this student population.

The students served by the project include teenage parents. For these students, day care is an issue. Day care is provided through the vo-tech vocational child care instruction program. This is locally recognized as a high quality program, and several established child care providers have contacted STW child care instructors with in-service requests. Transportation also is an obstacle to student job-site participation for low-income families. The local public transportation authority is a partner providing travel vouchers so students can get to and from the employment sites without paying fees.

Staff development also is provided to STW teachers and project personnel on various issues related to working with economically and educationally disadvantaged students, many of whom also are troubled or in trouble. The STW has a staff development committee that keeps abreast of in-service needs. In-services are provided on an ongoing basis for large and small groups and have included: "Effective Interventions for Working With At-Risk Students," "Working With Students Belonging to Gangs," "Interpreting Students' Assessment Results for Students and Parents," "Working With High School Personnel Interfacing With the Partnership," and others. Additional specialized training opportunities are provided by partners. For example, one business partner trained STW staff to be able to provide diversity training to other STW teachers and personnel. Also, the local branch of the county library trained several STW teachers to give literacy tutor training to volunteer tutors.

Resources

The STW always has drawn on resources other than federal funding. Naturally, as a vo-tech school serving several school districts, funding from the state flows according to student enrollment. Additional funds for the STW come from a Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) grant and a Perkins Tech-Prep grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Both these grants are for a defined period. However, STW staff integrate grant writing into their jobs and are continuing to locate and apply for funding from a variety of sources. Most recently, they won a grant to facilitate job training for at-risk students to prepare for jobs related to aviation. This resulted in a new set of internships and articulation agreements with a local community college already committed to transportation-related career development. STW staff have written and submitted a number of additional proposals. Although this means that many partnership activities are dependent largely on soft money support, the grant-earning record of STW staff, as well as the ongoing, systematic resource location efforts, may counter the instability of the resource base to some degree. In addition, the stable state money for vo-tech, the integration of many STW roles into vo-tech job descriptions, the relative permanence of articulation agreements (as well as the fact that the curriculum already is supported by participating institutions), and the extremely large in-kind support received make the soft money status less threatening than otherwise might be the case.

In-kind resources are varied. Staff members negotiated with the transit department and secured bus passes for students. They also use grants from other sources to pay students' salaries for a trial period, thus lessening business apprehension about hiring students who have had behavior problems. One of the universities provides practicum students who supplement paid staff. Local businesses and civic organizations provide space for meetings. The Department of Rehabilitation has allowed a partnership student-business liaison position to be shifted to its funding in order to continue to dovetail placement efforts for special needs students with partnership placement processes. The unemployment services department allows STW staff free access to the extensive job listings (all available positions in the state) as well as job information (qualifications of person being sought) provided in databases and by department personnel.

Many organizations and businesses donate materials and equipment. Some sponsor students to particular events, and others provide scholarships to universities. Partnership staff development also is provided partly through various partners, including the specialized training of some of the staff to become trainers.

Partnership Structure

Although at first, project steering committee meetings were held only occasionally and the agenda consisted of information sharing, the STW became more collaborative over time. Individuals responsible for coordinating the autonomous activities are more aware of one another as they have become more involved in meetings and decisionmaking processes. A project steering committee, which meets infrequently, includes representatives of all participating organizations. The project is managed by the vo-tech principal, her assistant, and a coordinator. Formal partnership meetings are held quarterly, with representation from the seven participating districts, partnership instructors and staff, college and university partners, and business partners. An agenda is covered, followed by a round robin in which partners update the group on what is occurring in their particular areas of responsibility. Further, personnel who have responsibilities for specific components of the project report at this time.

The primary purpose of the meetings is to keep all partners focused on the common goals and informed regarding the big picture aspects of the partnership. The attendees can contribute agenda items for upcoming meetings. Decisionmaking is primarily collaborative, although final approval rests with the principal. Attending partners are responsible for disseminating this information through their respective organizations. Partnership staff are responsible for disseminating information to participants involved in their respective project components. In addition, partnership staff (including both federally funded positions and nonfederally funded positions) attend weekly meetings. Subgroups which focused on specific activities also meet.

Although involving many partners and activities, the organizational focus is the vo-tech school. Partners take action either within the guidelines of the proposal or after consulting with one another in various meetings. Subgroups are organized around particular project components such as tutoring or articulations. Subgroups meet weekly to oversee the day-to-day operation of the activities and make minor decisions. Larger decisions requiring new resources or adding new activities are addressed in the quarterly partnership meetings. All partners are represented in the quarterly meetings. The principal, assistant principal, and the project coordinator ultimately make major projectwide decisions, such as officially incorporating new activities after group input. In terms of organization, this has moved from being a moderately complex partnership, with informal as-needed meetings with whichever partners had specific issues, to a truly complex partnership. Multiple institutions contribute to partnership leadership and maintain high levels of both formal and informal interaction at various levels within each institution.

Development

The number of partners, the nature of interaction, and the number and types of activities have all developed throughout the life of the partnership. The STW serves all schools in the county. Further, quite a few churches, community groups, and membership associations were added to the partnership, as well as several additional agencies and businesses. Some participate in project activities. Others, such as the churches, disseminate information about particular partnership events or provide meeting space for tutors and students. Still others, such as the community groups, donate needed items such as outfits for student job interviews. More formal mechanisms for interaction among partners were established to aid in coordinating activities, maintaining focus on the partnership objectives, disseminating information, and making decisions about adding new activities. In addition, several new activities have been implemented.

In the second year, the STW added new job training activities for students, staff development, volunteer training and staff development, and new business mentor/tutor training. The new activities involved additional partners. The STW developed a mentor/tutor curriculum for training volunteers in varied settings, including the job coach training. The vo-tech school also offers a peer mentoring/tutoring course for credit, and matches students with peer tutors and mentors. These mentor/tutor and job coach activities were expanded greatly in the third year of the project. The tutor training handbook, including the course curriculum, is available to others. In addition, the success of the various tutor/mentor programs is recognized in the community and has resulted in requests for peer tutors and for job coaches from nonparticipants as well (e.g., middle schools and employers with employee rehabilitation programs).

The third year of development saw a major increase in the number of articulation agreements. Currently, 300 articulations are in operation. One new arena of articulation involves aviation-related careers and included the area airport as a new partner. In a different approach, the first public high school is involved in an articulation of apparel professions. The vo-tech school previously could not articulate a clothing design course because it offered no sewing classes. Now students at a participating county high school who take sewing, design, and color in the home economics department can take apparel marketing at the vo-tech, and can then articulate to a well-reputed design program at a local technical college.

The STW also added a long-distance articulation and internship in year three. Employees who had been involved with STW students were relocated to another city. The employees remained committed to the STW, and project staff responded by developing internships at the new site and developing articulations with the local community college.

In year three, several events were added to support ongoing activities. For example, to aid in the job placement process, the STW now has a "business interview day" during which business partners volunteer to spend a day on campus and help the students develop job interview skills. They do this by role-playing job interviews with students. In addition, a community organization donates business outfits for students to wear to job interviews.

Another example of a supportive event is the new "mentor day" now provided for students taking business computer courses. These courses are part of an articulated business computer career path. To better acquaint students with the value of following such a path, the partnership matches each student with a mentor from the industry who spends the entire day discussing career and opportunity issues.

Finally, a formal student outreach mechanism was added to the articulation component of the partnership. An STW staff member currently is dedicated to visiting each classroom that carries articulation credit. This staff person explains the whole articulation concept to the students. She also shows them which entry-level jobs the courses they are enrolled in will prepare them to pursue and what broader career paths they might pursue through articulated postsecondary education. Question and answer periods are included.

Adaptive Planning

STW project staff consistently have demonstrated good adaptive planning. This has been true for all aspects of the partnership. Adaptive planning has been responsive to procedural needs, organizational needs, and programmatic opportunities. Examples of each follow.

Adaptive planning at the procedural level was first demonstrated early in the implementation of the project when it became clear that the student assessment process was becoming overwhelming. Originally, the plan was to test and place all participating students. The paperwork was too burdensome for available personnel and computer time. Project staff was increased, a new computer was purchased, and the time for testing increased. Staff further anticipated assessment problems when the participant pool was increased from 550 to 3,000. Realizing that increasing personnel and computer access sixfold would not be feasible, project staff radically altered assessment approaches. Willingness to face problems of scale early on and to let go of the previously established process enabled the STW to responsibly accommodate the burgeoning group of students served. Assessment procedures became part of the formal staff development for teachers, after which assessment responsibilities were distributed across the county for the project.

A period of recession narrowed job shadow and internship opportunities provided by business partners. STW staff responded by actively seeking to expand interorganizational relationships. When the economic downturn prompted the local Chamber of Commerce to survey local businesses in an attempt to assess the relative economic stability of the area, the STW project director got involved in order to add partnership-specific questions to the survey. This enabled partnership staff to determine potential sources for job shadow participation, business mentor-tutor recruitment, and student placement possibilities across 12,000 businesses with a small effort. Only a small percentage of the responding businesses had any previous contact with the partnership staff. The importance of broad-based recruitment is increased in times when established business partners find themselves unable to fully participate because of financial restrictions. Three hundred business partners are now in the project.

Adaptive planning at the programmatic level has been evident on several occasions. In many cases, such planning is built upon well-established relationships among partners and is sparked by unanticipated circumstances. For example, when the recession reduced the job shadows and internships offered by established partners, STW staff found a new role for those partners. This served to reinforce the relationship and to keep participation meaningful for employee volunteers. STW staff implemented and then emphasized the job-site tutoring and mentoring component of the project. Once the economy improved, job shadows, internships, and placements were built back up with these same partners. Thus, the adaptive change in participation roles served not only to add new activities but also to protect valued resources.

Good partner relationships also enabled the STW articulation specialist to take advantage of her contacts when a local department store closed. Although losing a valued partner, she recognized the potential opportunity and was able to obtain significant equipment donations to marketing, merchandising, and fashion programs.

Finally, a strong example of adaptive planning is evident in the STW response to the continued interest of former partnership participants relocated to an out-of-state site. When a large local employer, who had been a partner in the STW, relocated, the people who had been involved with the STW wished to continue more meaningful participation. By maintaining good relationships with these former participants, STW administrators discovered that the company had a staffing problem at the new site because the labor pool trained to fit entry-level positions was inadequate. The end result was an articulation with a community college in the city. Students who graduate from relevant articulated vo-tech classes, and are willing to relocate, now are able to intern with the employer and also pursue relevant career training at the college for future advancement.

Thus, the loss of a local business partner during the more difficult economic times did not extinguish the well-established relationships with individual participants but opened the possibility of innovative additions to the project activities. In addition, both longer term and newly recruited local partners provided increased internship, job shadowing, and job placement opportunities as the local economy improved.

Impact

The STW had a major impact on staff and students involved in the partnership. Staff members were involved in numerous staff development activities, including opportunities usually offered only to business people. The data on student impact are impressive. Both issues are addressed in the following section.

Impact on Staff

Staff involved in the STW indicate that they have grown through their participation. The teachers involved in developing articulation agreements report greater understanding of the competencies needed for success in the particular occupation. This, they say, has helped focus and improve their instruction. Their understanding of career paths available also has improved their ability to counsel students.

Staff also are involved in ongoing staff development. A partnership subcommittee is charged with determining staff development needs and arranging appropriate staff in-services. One of the in-services focuses on teaching teachers how to work with business. Another trains staff to conduct classroom-based student assessment. A large local business provided diversity training to the partnership staff and then trained particular staff members to be able to continue to offer diversity training to other STW teachers and staff members. The county library trained project participants to be volunteer literacy tutors. It also provided training to project staff to enable them to train later volunteer groups in this capacity.

Impact on Students

The STW reaches a broad range of students placed at risk: 125 participated in year one; 550 participated in year two; and 3,000 currently are participating in the STW. The partnership has instituted several sources of client feedback. The students who are engaged in job shadowing or placement are monitored weekly. Employer and employee issues thus can be dealt with in a timely manner. At-risk students in the project also are tracked in terms of attendance and class performance through tutor-mentors. Outcome data also are formally gathered for a longitudinal assessment of project participants. A sample of 522 STW students has been matched by demographic and other characteristics to nonparticipating students and will be tracked following completion of the project.

Few of the first-year pool of 125 dropped out (5 percent) as compared to the high school dropout rate of their peers (26 percent). Of the 118 who graduated, 105 were placed in jobs. Nearly all (95 percent) of the students placed in jobs after completing the partnership project still are successfully retained by their employers beyond the 90-day trial period. Virtually all of the remaining students went on to pursue postsecondary education. On average, the participants earned 15 college credits through articulated vo-tech courses, and some entered as second semester freshmen.

Six of the students are enrolling at a major state university, with full two-year scholarships. Although the year-two entrants have just completed the project, follow-up data are not yet available for them.

During year two, 550 students participated. Because this is a two-year project, this number includes the first-year participants who were still in the project. The peer tutor-mentor program also was established during year two of the STW. Of the 550 participating students, 125 were involved in the peer tutor-mentor program as tutors or as tutored students. Counselors judged the tutor-student matches to be successful in most cases (90 percent). The local evaluation reported that students participating as tutors or as tutored students stayed in school, were absent less frequently, and performed better in their classes. Similar impact was evident in the third year. For most participants (90 percent), absenteeism decreased (dropping below 10 percent). Performance also improved as participant GPAs increased an average of .5 over the course of a year. Three thousand students participated in the STW in the third year.

Institutionalization

The STW is fully institutionalized. The organizational and programmatic levels of the project have been implemented successfully and are supported by long-standing institutional relationships and policy changes that facilitate institutionalization. The 2+2 / 2+2+2 articulations are formalized and the project participants are pursuing connections and actively advocating policy that will aid in project institutionalization and further development. Implementation also is aided through strategic connections to social service agencies and to university programs with community internship requirements. Other more specific in-kind resources include access to the unemployment office database and transportation voucher agreements with the city to enable students to get to their jobs.

Organizational

The paid project staff are not dependent on EPP funds. As previously described, the vo-tech school receives state support, and alternative funding sources already have been integrated into the budget and will continue to be, as proposal writing is an ongoing activity within the partnership. Further, the vo-tech school has fully integrated the partnership goals into its ongoing activities and policies. Staff are assessed, in part, in terms of their duties and responsibilities to partnership activities. According to the project director, "The partnership is not just a project, it has become inextricable from everything that we do." Various two- and four-year colleges have changed policies regarding articulation. This has resulted in consortium membership with partnership articulation staff, as well as in the establishment, for example, of college-based articulation positions filled by partnership staff. In addition, partners have signed commitment agreements that detail the expectations and benefits of their partnership responsibilities. Finally, partners such as the county library and two large businesses provide ongoing training or technical assistance. One of the companies also has devoted several pages of the company manual to employee volunteer policies, and provides release time and training for partnership activity involvement.

Community Support

There are several indications that the community has become aware of partnership activities and considers them to be worthwhile. Numerous community-based organizations, churches, and service clubs recently have become involved in the partnership and provide services and resources. For example, when several STW marketing students became finalists in a national vocational club competition, local businesses sponsored the travel so that finalists could attend the final phase of the competition. The previously mentioned participation of local professionals on job interview day and on computer business mentor day indicates strong support in the local business community. The partnership activities are seen as worthwhile because they are judged to be of good quality.

The quality of the vocational training is receiving community recognition. This is evident particularly for the job coaches trained to work with employee rehabilitation. Some high demand organizations do not post job coach openings but directly contact the STW job coach instructor for referrals. Overall job coach placement rates are very high. Child care training instruction also is well reputed. Several established child care providers have contacted the County/STW instructor with in-service requests. Such requests are honored, although providing in-service lies beyond the original scope of the activity. Similarly, the peer tutoring activity has moved beyond the original intent because of a growing positive reputation in the community. Originally conceived as a support for vo-tech students, peer tutors trained through the STW course are being requested by area high schools and middle schools. This is truly a success story as many of the peer tutors who train to work with students placed at risk also were considered to be at risk when they began tutor training.

Conclusion

The STW partnership exemplifies a successful effort to ease students' transition from school to work. The STW serves a diverse and difficult population and has created a variety of activities that ensure that students can finish school successfully and gain employment or continue with their education. In part, the success of the program can be credited to the vision and management ability of the principal of the vo-tech school. In addition, however, the partnership's willingness to identify and address problems, as well as its ability to take advantage of opportunities, are factors in its success.

The STW is extraordinarily complex. It involves school districts, 11 institutions of higher education, over 70 businesses, 6 public agencies, and numerous community-based organizations. Some partners are more active than others, but the steering committee, which represents the most active partners, has 25 people. How can the STW succeed with such complexity? The answers seem to lie in two areas.

First, the STW began slowly. Articulation agreements, which are difficult to develop and form the core of the program, were developed carefully and over time. The total increased every year. And, although staff members responsible for the vocational area involved had responsibility for developing the agreements, an STW staff member was assigned to coordinate the process. His growing knowledge of how to address content, turf, and personality issues enabled the partnership to develop increasing numbers of articulations.

Second, collaborative decisionmaking takes place at two levels. The steering committee identifies problems and recommends solutions to the project director, who also is the principal of the vo-tech school. The committee also identifies opportunities that the STW might take advantage of. The problems and opportunities so identified affect broad policy. The second level for collaboration is operational. That is, vo-tech teachers and their counterparts in the institutions of higher education develop articulation agreements; vocational counselors work with unemployment services department staff to find jobs for graduates; businesses and STW coordinators work together to place students in job shadowing and internship experiences; and STW staff and community-based organizations collaborate to provide support services to needy students. At this level, most decisionmaking is dyadic. Consequently, although the STW is complex, most participants do not have to deal with the complexity daily.

Curriculum-Focused Partnership

Introduction

Throughout the nation, universities work with public schools to improve curriculum and instruction. Some engage in collaborative efforts, such as professional development schools (PDSs), that have both school improvement and teacher education goals. Others are less comprehensive, concentrating on improvement in a particular curriculum area. The Curriculum-Focused Partnership (CFP) described in this case study exemplifies the latter type of university-school partnership. The CFP operated in a difficult context, which may account for its limited success. At the same time, the case provides guidance on actions to avoid as well as activities that hold promise.

The CFP teaches:

- University students are a valuable resource for classroom teachers, even if the students are not preservice teachers.
- Highly stressed large urban school districts pose extreme challenges to university-based partnerships.
- When partnerships do not receive feedback regularly, their importance may dwindle.

The CFP was designed to bring together the resources and expertise of higher education, the local private sector, nonprofit educational and cultural organizations, and an urban district to improve instruction in science in the intermediate grades. Specific objectives of the project include: establishing innovative science intermediate grade programs in schools identified as "the most needy" in the city; providing monthly in-service training programs for science teachers; providing classroom support by graduate students to selected teachers as they implement innovative science and math curricula; and providing intensive training to selected teachers so they can assume leadership roles at the completion of the project.

The classroom support, which became the major focus of the CFP, was provided by graduate students in science. The graduate students demonstrated innovative science instruction in the classrooms each week.

The partners included not only the school district and the local university, but a science center and a private sector school-focused organization. Neither of these was an active participant in the daily operations of the CFP, although the science center used the CFP funding to expand its school services. The private sector organization, a council of businesses with an interest in improving education, sent a representative to the (infrequent) meetings of the CFP but had little policy input or role in the partnership's activities.

Context

The schools identified for this partnership project are located in the center of an extremely blighted city. The city has a long history of fiscal and educational failure. The center of the city includes abandoned housing, drug "supermarkets," public housing projects, and poorly maintained schools. Over 91 percent of the students in the district are ethnic minority, and the percentage is even higher in center city. At one school served by the project, close to 85 percent of the students are homeless, with extensive substance abuse in their families. There is a high rate of mobility and transience. For both educational and financial reasons, the state is working toward taking over the district. This leads district personnel to feel beleaguered and harbor suspicions of outsiders. As in many urban districts, internal divisions within the central administration compound the difficulty of doing business in the district.

Both the university and the science center reflect the progressive tradition of the community. The university, located near the center of the city, has a long tradition of seeking to increase enrollment in science and mathematics of a traditionally underrepresented population. From the 1970s on, this tradition has led to concerns about the "pipeline," and concomitant interest in improving educational opportunities in the local public schools. The availability of funds from the EPP was seen as a way to extend such programs through the Pipeline Center. Similarly, the science center had long had engaged in outreach to the schools, and staff at the science center welcomed the opportunity to increase existing efforts.

Unlike many cities, however, the city had little tradition of business involvement in community affairs. The few large businesses that remained in the city engaged in some philanthropy, largely to hospitals, but were not involved in city politics or education. The council of businesses was an effort to gather business support for education, but it was struggling to define its role and had little presence in the CFP.

Initiation

The CFP was begun by a professor at the university. He was the director of the Pipeline Center, which attended to the pipeline issues involved in science and mathematics enrollment, and also active in state professional associations. He devised the initial idea and convened the members of the current partnership, assuming a primary role for planning and decisionmaking.

The Pipeline Center has limited hard money. Consequently, staff always seek opportunities for additional funding. The EPP announcement was, in the director's eyes, "an opportunity to do some good." The center had provided graduate student assistants to some teachers in the city, and the director believed that focusing the assistance would be beneficial. The goal was to improve curriculum and instruction in science in intermediate grades, a level of schooling he saw as a "wasteland."

At the start, the CFP was carefully designed and followed a compelling logic. The argument was: To improve instruction at the intermediate grades, teachers need models of what good science teaching is. Consequently, the graduate students will come into classes regularly, demonstrate appropriate instruction, and work with the teachers so they understand how to teach better. At the same time, teachers will receive regular in-services, focused both on science curriculum and instruction, and the content of science. The latter focus is warranted, according to the argument, because one reason that science is so badly taught is that intermediate-level teachers do not themselves understand the scientific concepts. These classroom- and teacher-centered activities were to be further supported by the science center's provision of materials that could be used in the improved lessons. Further, the science center would create a teacher center, using mainly non-CFP funds, that would support teacher development. The logic also held that by concentrating the CFP's efforts within a limited number of the most troubled schools, the impact would be greatest. Further, the teachers involved with the CFP would become leaders in their schools and the district, and carry the improvement on after the project ended.

In the initial stages, the role of the private sector was as ill-defined as it was throughout the project.

The director approached the district's associate superintendent with the idea of the CFP already developed. The associate superintendent has a reputation for being aggressive on behalf of the schools and has pursued a variety of partnerships between her schools and other organizations (both private and public) wherever she could find them. However, she works within a strife-ridden and contentious district, whose challenges are magnified by the threat of receivership. The project was announced at a general meeting of area teachers and administrators, and principals who were not included in the initial planning phases of the project. Project staff indicated that the principals did not think that they had a voice in how this project was to develop in their schools, and consequently, some expressed resistance to implementing the project at their site. Relationships between project staff and teachers required considerable time and energy at the outset, in part because of wariness and lack of cooperation by some of the principals. Project staff attempted to work with schools where the principal was at least receptive, if not openly supportive.

Implementation

Implementation of the CFP was uneven. The graduate student assistance to classrooms occurred, and as graduate students expressed a need for greater support, the director hired additional staff responsible for developing a resource room and a manual for classroom helpers. However, the vision of teachers working with the graduate students never materialized, and attendance at in-service workshops was spotty. The science center continued its educational support activities, but it had few ties to the curriculum improvement efforts.

Perhaps most problematic was the relationship with the school district. The original image was that the area schools would be helped to develop a meaningful science curriculum, reflecting current thinking in science education. However, the district's science curriculum was unevenly implemented, so the CFP could not work within an established scope and sequence. Even more important, although the school district is the partner of record for this funded partnership, individual schools functioned largely as independent partners, with basic partnerships developing at each site among the school administrators, the teachers, and the university staff and graduate students. The commitment of each principal has been critical to overall project success at each school and has influenced heavily the degree of teacher commitment demonstrated. At one site, the principal said that he "holds the vision for the project," and that there is a high attendance rate at teacher training workshops. Some teachers report visits to their classrooms by either the principal or the vice principal as indicators of support. However, the principals were never involved as *partners*, or decisionmakers, in the implementation stage of the project and were *informed* rather than consulted about the implementation of this project in their schools.

When viewed as an interorganizational arrangement, then, the CFP is actually a series of dyadic relations between the university and individual schools. The science center, also a partner of record, has its own dyadic relationship with schools, most of which are not involved in the CFP. In fact, there are no differences in the scope or intensity of services offered to CFP schools and other schools in the district.

The following section begins with a discussion of the partnership structure and moves to analysis of its activities.

Partnership Structure

The most notable aspect of the partnership structure is the absence of any formal links among partners. The primary partners are the science center, the university, and the local school district. The business group is listed as a partner, but no representatives from this body attended meetings regularly in the early stages of the partnership. Communication is conducted informally and decisions about implementation issues tend to be made by the project director and his staff. There is little structured interaction among partners. Initially, this lack of structure was of some concern to the science center and the school district, who would have preferred more formal meetings and a defined policy role. However, participants have come to accept the style of the director.

Each of the primary partners entered into the partnership because it presented a way to further pursue areas that each organization already had determined were important to its mission. The associate superintendent had been committed to improving science education in her schools and perceived the partnership project as something that would help the schools reach those goals. She was quick to state that the most significant benefits of this partnership to the schools were the resources each partner was able to contribute. However, this associate superintendent sent mixed signals about the importance attached to this project. For example, the CFP was not included in meetings of representatives of partnerships in the city.

The science center agreed to join forces with the university and the schools after being approached by the project director, but was unclear of the scope or content of its involvement in teacher development activities, stating its expectation that these would be determined as collaboration developed. The science center director realized, he said, that the CFP would not become a collaborative effort to improve schools. Consequently, he came to view the CFP as a source or fiscal support for activities that his institution already was engaged in.

Activities

The objectives of this project were to establish innovative science intermediate school programs, provide monthly in-services and intensive support activities for selected teachers, and to offer in-service training for teachers who would be able to assume leadership roles in their schools and throughout the district at the completion of the project. Strategies to assist in the implementation of these project objectives included after-school teacher development workshops, all day or weekend in-services, and one-on-one coaching by university science graduate students. The graduate students presented model lessons to students to demonstrate hands-on science teaching. An additional strategy to help implement the partnership goals was to increase the use of the science center's educational outreach program by familiarizing teachers with what was available.

University graduate students provided in-class support to teachers, coaching them on the presentation of hands-on science lessons. The majority of the participating graduate students were from the same ethnic minority groups as the students in the schools. Further, many of them were male. One unanticipated consequence was that the graduate students served as role models for the intermediate grade students.

When the graduate students, none of whom had been involved in teacher preparation programs, expressed concern about how they were to approach their task, the project hired additional staff and developed resource guides and manuals. The students were trained by university staff to present grade-appropriate science activities and to communicate effectively. The graduate students were encouraged to support the teachers in their development of self-confidence and new subject matter expertise. In theory, each graduate student planned lessons in consultation with his or her classroom teacher, but in most instances, the teachers relied on the students to develop the ideas. Further, teacher adherence to district curricular guidelines varied. From the perspective of project staff, the district lacked meaningful scope and sequence guidance.

Teachers varied in the degree to which they depended on their graduate assistants. Many teachers "handed over" their classes to their assistants, who taught the entire lessons. Others cotaught classes, and included 5 to 10 minutes of hands-on science in every science class, using the graduate assistants for support. The project director's goal is to see a gradual decline in teacher dependence on graduate assistants. The policy is that the average length of time a teacher should work with a graduate student would be two years.

As the CFP developed, the codirector emerged as a critical player in project implementation. A long-time staff member of the university's Pipeline Center, he has extensive experience working with science and math teachers and has been instrumental in developing and sustaining relationships with the teachers involved in the project and with the staff in the central administration. Maintaining a low profile, the codirector is accessible to teachers who feel insecure about taking on the daunting new responsibilities of teaching science and math. Improved relationships with principals over time as well as sustained involvement of the teachers can be attributed, in large part, to his strong interpersonal skills. The associate superintendent for the district considers her primary relationship to the project to be with the codirector. The director and codirector maintain individual leadership roles within different, discrete areas of the project. The university professor is the final arbiter of project policy and staff decisions, and makes these decisions autonomously. The codirector is a leader in areas of implementation and the first person on project matters to be approached by individuals at the school level.

Development

During the first year of the CFP, attendance at the in-service workshops was low. It improved somewhat during the second year. There appears to be a relationship between the commitment demonstrated by the school principal (and assistant principal) to the project and to extracurricular training activities by the teachers. Those schools where principals (or assistant principals) visited the classrooms, discussed the project with other staff members, and displayed a public appreciation for the project also were the schools where teachers participated the most in teacher development activities.

Over time, principals became more enthusiastic about the projects at their schools. Principals expressed appreciation for assistance provided by the graduate students and encouraged teachers to attend in-service activities. Principals varied in their levels of support, ranging from passive acceptance to demonstrable support. Those who have changed their perceptions attributed their new attitude to improvement in their teachers' skills and the visible enthusiasm of the students for hands-on science activities. One principal said, "If the kids are excited about what they are learning, they will keep coming back to school."

Involvement with the central administration remained fairly consistent throughout the duration of the project. There was no staff turnover in the participating district offices and everyone originally assigned to the project remained with the project. The importance attached to this project, however, varied among different district administrators. In particular, this project was noticeably absent from a list of partnerships compiled by the associate superintendent.

Teachers shared their new experiences with colleagues, but the level of sharing varied from school to school and from teacher to teacher. However, the level of principal encouragement influenced the degree to which teachers were willing to present their new experiences to others. At some schools, teachers shared new techniques and methods with the entire school at staff meetings and conducted in-house workshops for other teachers. Other teachers were still "too busy trying to figure it out for themselves" to share information with their colleagues, in the words of one principal. Even those teachers who shared information do not view themselves as "curriculum leaders." Perhaps most important, the sharing that takes place is of "model" lessons, and there remains no attention to scope and sequence or to the content that students should learn.

Graduate student assignments increased throughout the development of the project. The project director considered the graduate assistants to be the most important critical element in the project, and indicated his intent to secure funds to continue supporting graduate assistants in the classroom after partnership grant funds were terminated. In general, graduate assistant involvement in the classrooms and with the teachers was considered successful. In a few cases, student behavior and classroom management problems presented some difficulties, and, in even fewer cases, difficulties between the graduate students and the teachers were reported. Where there was friction between a teacher and an assistant, it was usually because the assistant attempted an instructional approach that the teacher did not approve, or because there were problems between graduate assistants and students. Project staff members provided extensive support to graduate students and by intervening quickly they usually dispelled tension fast. The relationships between teachers and graduate assistants were overwhelmingly viewed as positive and productive by teachers, graduate assistants, project staff, and school principals. Teachers commented on how the graduate assistants were "excellent role models" for the intermediate level students.

At the start of the project, the graduate students were given only cursory training. However, they expressed concern about their performance so greater attention was paid to selecting and training graduate students to ensure that the most appropriate candidates were equipped in the best possible way to work with teachers and students. A rigorous selection process was designed to identify candidates who had the requisite knowledge, interpersonal skills, and level of sensitivity necessary for such an assignment. Graduate students engaged in a two-to-four week training period that provided instruction in theory as well as practice. Further, pedagogical issues were addressed. Graduate assistants were encouraged by university staff members to view their relationship with their teacher as their priority. They were encouraged to develop a "partner" relationship with their teacher, request teacher feedback, discover teacher needs, and actively involve the teacher in the planning process.

In the eyes of most school district participants, the CFP *was* the graduate assistants.

Impact

The impact of the CFP is difficult to assess. On the one hand, the increased numbers of graduate students working in classrooms and their increased skill at doing so meant that students were exposed to hands-on science regularly. Some participating teachers also reported gaining comfort with new ways of teaching science. On the other hand, the teachers did not become curriculum leaders and the relationship of the science center's outreach program to the improvement of science instruction never developed. For a variety of reasons, impact on students cannot be judged.

This section begins with a discussion of the nature of the CFP's impact on the city schools, including the impact on curriculum and instruction, and teachers. It then moves to a brief look at the impact on students.

Schools and Teachers

The context in which the CFP worked mitigated impacts on schools. The city school district is in fiscal and educational disarray, as indicated by the state's efforts to take over the district. Further, the district must rise to the challenge of teaching severely educationally disadvantaged students who live in an area that is beset by drugs, crime, and corruption. The district office itself is the scene of internal politics as well as the home to dedicated educators. However, even within this context, other partnerships have made an impact on schools. Recently, for example, the assistant superintendent began meeting regularly with representatives of all the partnership organizations with which the schools work. The CFP is not included in these meetings.

The reasons for the omission are unclear. However, the project director's informal communication style contributed to the CFP's lack of visibility at the school-district level. The director's concern is at the classroom level. Although he talks about the importance of working on the *district's* curriculum, he does not include district personnel in his communications. One result is that the classroom activities are seen as an "extra," rather than part of a curriculum improvement effort. The director stated, "I can't stand meetings that have no purpose." But he failed to connect the CFP's marginal status in the district with this position.

The lack of connection to the district also influenced the degree of success with teachers. Although most participating teachers valued the work of the graduate students, and many believed they would continue to teach "hands-on science," they did not view themselves as curriculum leaders.

The participating teachers consistently indicated that the following problems deterred them from effective science teaching: secure storage of instructional materials, low institutional priority given to science teaching, need for smaller class sizes to do hands-on science, and the need for supportive leadership from the administration. During the life of the project, some teachers noted an increased interest in and support for the teaching of science. The involvement of graduate assistants as models of effective science teaching coincided with initial evidence of change in teacher behavior. Principals noted a change not only in the attitudes of teachers but also in their performance, and talked about an increase in student enthusiasm for science classes. In some instances, graduate students coached teachers in new methods of instruction. But feedback sessions, according to project staff, were difficult to implement because graduate assistants felt intimidated about providing honest responses to teachers. In a few instances, teachers were dropped from the project because they were content to let the graduate assistants do all the hands-on activities or were, at best, only partially engaged in the activities. Some of the coaching actually involved the graduate assistant providing encouragement to the teacher to take ownership of new approaches and begin developing original ideas him or herself.

Self-initiated science teaching and requests for supplies are some of the indicators of success. The number of teachers committed to new approaches to teaching science grew. Project staff indicated that after the second year of the project, the number had grown to 10 or 11 teachers who would be able to assume positions of responsibility for implementing new approaches to science teaching. Teachers said that without the graduate students, they would not have provided as many hands-on activities for their students because of the time required for preparation.

In the project design, additional materials were seen as coming from the science center's outreach program. Although the science center reported an increase in use of the materials they provided, no data were kept that would allow attribution to the CFP. Further, the teachers expressed concern that after the partnership ended, they would not have access to the materials brought by the graduate students.

Students

The school administration provided the project management with standardized reading, math, and language arts test scores. However, this information cannot be used to infer project effectiveness because of the involvement of multiple external service providers to the CFP.

Subjectively, principals and especially teachers commented on marked improvements in students' attitudes toward science. Teachers believe that the hands-on activities and the practical focus of many of the lessons made science relevant and fun for students. This enthusiasm resulted in improved attention and concentration and a willingness to participate more actively in class. The presence of the graduate students has benefited the students in other ways as well. In many cases, teachers described them as role models for their students.

Institutionalization

Probably because the partnership structure was only loosely implemented, it was not institutionalized. At the end of EPP funding, each of the primary partners continued its activities. The science center expressed gratitude for the opportunity to extend its outreach services. Staff members at the Pipeline Center thought the CFP enabled them to provide an important service to schools and to develop support structures needed by graduate students. The business community had only a tangential relationship to the CFP, and there were no continuing ties. On the district level, there was little of the CFP to institutionalize, but teachers seemed likely to continue teaching hands-on science and sharing their experiences when encouraged by principals.

Partnership

The CFP operated with an informal communication style among partners. Further, decisions were made by the Pipeline Center and communicated to other participants. Most relationships were dyadic, between individual teachers and either staff or graduate students from the Pipeline Center or the science center outreach department. Consequently, the partnership structure was not institutionalized.

According to participants, they never intended the partnership to be institutionalized. Each partner organization viewed participating in the CFP as an opportunity to continue, strengthen, or expand already existing community outreach programs. The university already had been involved in using graduate students to assist with teacher development and teacher training. The science center already had been involved in outreach to the schools. The school district was concerned about the quality of instruction at the intermediate level and was under pressure from the state to improve student outcomes.

From the beginning of the project, it was clear that the project would be managed through the Pipeline Center, and that communications with the school district and decisionmaking around project activities would be handled by the project director, with occasional input from the codirector. Projectwide decisions (e.g., relating to personnel) were viewed by the project director as his domain. Although the science center initially expressed a desire for a more formal management structure, the informality established at the beginning became the norm, and the role of the science center evolved into one of providing services to teachers. The science center never became involved in policy issues affecting the implementation of partnership activities except as they affected the science center directly.

The business community nominally participated by providing resources and making in-kind contributions through already established programs. It was difficult to identify specific contributions that grew out of involvement in the CFP. Many businesses had a prior history of helping individual schools, and the CFP did not require changed roles.

Activities

The project director, as well as participating principals and teachers, viewed the graduate students as the key element in the CFP. The role of the science center was more isolated, and even teachers who participated in science center-sponsored activities did not see the science center as a "partner" in what they were doing with the university and the graduate students. The relationship between individual teacher and graduate student, by definition of the project director, was to be one of short duration (two years) and not designed to remain ongoing.

Several principals spoke highly of the graduate student assistants and attributed marked improvement in teachers' and students' skills to their work. Several expressed the desire to make similar coaching arrangements available to all teachers, but none was willing to devote limited staff development funds to such an activity. The Pipeline Center expressed an intention to continue to seek money to support the presence of graduate students in the classroom.

Conclusion

The CFP exemplifies the work of many partnerships in both its successes and its failures. On the positive side, it developed and implemented an innovative method of improving instruction. The use of non-education graduate students had several positive effects. One that was discussed very little is that ethnic minority students developed relationships with graduate students from the same ethnic group. This provided a view of possible future opportunities generally unavailable to the young people. A second effect was that teachers saw hands-on science instruction in action and were able to "practice" new ways of teaching, receiving feedback on their efforts. By the end of funding, principals and Pipeline Center staff reported that up to a dozen teachers had changed how they taught.

Equally positive, the science center was able to expand its outreach activities through the CFP. However, the outreach activities were never integrated into the overall curriculum improvement effort. As a result, although teachers had access to the additional materials they desired, they did not see the connection between those materials and the hands-on science instruction they offered.

More negatively, the improvement of instruction of the participating teachers was not translated into curriculum and instructional change throughout the participating schools, let alone throughout the district. Some teachers took advantage of the in-service activities offered by the CFP to enhance their own skills, but few used the opportunity to develop leadership skills. In some schools, a supportive principal facilitated sharing among participating and nonparticipating teachers, but this was not systematically encouraged by the CFP.

In addition, although participating organizations were committed to completing their activities successfully, they never developed an enduring relationship. The partners said that continuing a partnership was never a goal of the project. However, each has important knowledge and skills to contribute to a continuing improvement process. If the partnership had developed, at the end of the EPP grant, the science center and the Pipeline Center might have been able to provide services that supported each others' efforts, whether a formal relationship existed or not. As it was, each intended to seek funds to continue its work separately, and it is likely that their efforts will have less and less common focus.

Perhaps most important, the CFP was unable to work with the school district to improve science curriculum guidelines for the district. Consequently, the relationship between hands-on science teaching and a coherent approach to curriculum improvement did not develop. For students, then, the opportunity to receive high quality instruction was dependent on whether they were lucky enough to be in the classroom of a teacher who worked well with a graduate student. Further, the extent to which even those teachers who were positively affected by the project will continue using the new approaches is unclear. Neither the district nor the Pipeline Center is committed to ongoing support of their efforts.

The CFP had marked strengths, but also marked weaknesses. The reasons for the weaknesses were twofold. First, the project director held a clear vision of what good science teaching was and had creative ideas about how to influence classroom instruction. He was less knowledgeable and creative about how to work with partners and how to spread the impact of his center's efforts. His informal communication style coupled with his focus on the classroom to the exclusion of the school or the district contributed to the limited impact of the project.

The project director's limitations, however, were probably less significant than the overwhelming problems in the school district. Internal struggles, misperceptions about the importance of principals, stressful relationships between teachers and their principals, and an overall sense of frustration at the administrative level inevitably hindered the implementation of successful grass-roots projects.

The CFP, then, raises a fundamental question about educational partnerships. The question is: Is the formation of a partnership an effective strategy for curriculum and instructional improvement in highly stressed school environments? Would educational reform be better served with attention to dysfunction at the district and school level? That the schools in the district needed outside help was evident. What is less clear is whether they were able to benefit from the type of assistance offered by the CFP.

Before starting a similar endeavor, it may be important to ask such questions as:

- What expectations about teachers' willingness to commit time to in-service and other activities are reasonable?
- What help will best serve curriculum and instructional reform? Is the focus on individual teachers appropriate?
- Will participating teachers be willing and able to help other teachers? What incentives exist to encourage them to do so?
- Are classrooms adequately equipped for hands-on instruction?

- Is the system supportive of this type of innovation? What incentives exist to encourage such support?

Questions of infrastructure and system support can be answered only with the active participation of the school district. External partners can help raise appropriate questions and work with district and school staff to answer them. Further, partnerships can be successful only when their activities fit with the answers. For example, if no incentives exist for teachers to help other teachers, the partnership cannot rely on such help as an integral element of its design.

Basically, the CFP illustrates the difference between successful service delivery and successful partnerships. The CFP successfully delivered services, but it was unable to achieve long-lasting and broad improvement in science instruction.

Multifocus Partnership

Introduction

The Multifocus Partnership (MFP) was one of the most complex and ambitious partnerships funded by the EPP. It encompassed a small city, the county surrounding it, the school districts of the city and county, a county education office, an organization that represented the largest employers in the area, the local university, a more distant university, health agencies, civic groups, and an organization that provided training to both union and management of the city's largest employer. Its goals were to bring about educational reform throughout city and county schools and to use the reform in the context of economic development. The MFP itself served as a broad umbrella under which a wide variety of partnerships between individual schools or school districts and businesses and community agencies were covered.

The case study of the MFP is included not only because the MFP is a successful example of using the concept of educational partnerships to bring about broad systemic change, but also because it illustrates the difficulties in doing so. The MFP struggled with process and focus during its first two years, but was able to solve the problems it encountered and get on a course that holds great promise, according to those involved.

One result of the struggles of the MFP were important lessons to the field. These include:

- contrasts in the success of a leader who saw his role as facilitative and one who brought commitment to particular programs and processes to the partnership;
- the use of an educational partnership to leverage additional funding for activities deemed important by the community;
- the use of an educational partnership to garner support for school reform in a community; and
- the dilemmas of reform, particularly whether the partnership would be best served by a focus on developing model programs or one on changing school and district structures and processes.

The very success of the MFP raises a fundamental issue inherent in a broad community partnership: Each organization (including the City School District (CSD), the city, the large business organization, and the county school districts) had a representative on the MFP Council. As a result, the "votes" of a county district and the city school district were equal. The area's demographics are much like the demographics in other communities, with a large ethnic minority and poor population in the city, surrounded by more affluent white suburbs. The structure of the partnership has a tendency, then, to dilute the political power of the elected school board and mayor of the city. As will be seen, some choices of program focus seem to reflect this dilution of influence. This fundamental issue will be discussed further in the conclusion of the case study.

Brief Description

The MFP is a complex partnership with many participants who comprise the Community Forum. Its goal was to create systemic change in the CSD and city and other county schools. The County Education Agent was the fiscal agent for the EPP grant. Active participants include businesses (mainly through an organization that represents the largest businesses in the county), social service agencies, health providers (including the local hospital), and two universities. As the partnership began, the major activities were concentrated in the one area of the city and included an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school. By the end of EPP funding, the area's high school was the site of fewer partnership activities, and the Forum was active throughout the county as well as in developing districtwide policy for the CSD and activities in both county and city schools.

Community commitment to the Forum is high, as indicated by the use of federal funds for activities and locally generated funds for staff. Local funds include in-kind contributions, including the contribution of a full-time administrative assistant, for Forum staff, money for a large portion of the project director's salary, assignment of a program staff member from the business council to Forum activities, and donation of space for Forum offices from a local union. In addition, a community foundation supported Forum activities, particularly a series of community meetings about education that were used to increase support for school reform. The Forum supported the successful preparation of a grant application to an out-of-state foundation to support a program that would be a pilot for an integrated services approach. The use of Forum facilities to leverage additional funds increased the credibility of the Forum in the community.

Structurally, the Forum itself comprises high-level representatives of almost 60 organizations, businesses, governmental entities, school districts, and community-based organizations. It met annually, and, after two years of EPP funding, formed a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization. The Forum was supported by a broader Work Team, which included representatives from the Forum Executive Committee as well as midlevel managers and community representatives. The Work Team met weekly at first, moving to meeting every other week when partnership activities were well implemented.

The Work Team sponsored three subcommittees, each of which had representatives from business, schools, and social and health service agencies. One subcommittee focused on the transition from school to work, a second on developing coordinated social and health services, and the third on reform within schools. The educational reform subcommittee built directly on work of the more distant university and includes PDSs. The health and social service subcommittee supported the preparation of the integrated services grant application and has developed school-based health programs in additional CSD schools. The school-to-work transition subcommittee is the locus of activity involving reform of vocational education in the CSD and the county vo-tech school, as well as other school-to-work transition activities in several county schools, including a high technology-oriented program in a remote suburb.

During the third year of the EPP grant, the Forum sponsored a series of community meetings that focused on the impact of the demands of the "new" workplace on educational institutions.

The Forum gained much publicity about the meetings, including an annual follow-up series on area schools in the local newspaper.

The Forum brought together several separate educationally oriented efforts that already were in progress in the CSD or county schools. As such, the Forum served as an umbrella for almost all activities that involve schools with nonschool agencies. In addition, the Forum provided funding for activities at selected CSD schools, for CSD district-level activities, and for model programs throughout the county.

Context

The city is a prototypical rust-belt city. It was hit hard by the economic recession of the late 1980s, losing jobs and population as a result. The city has benefited from the general economic upturn, but the increase in jobs does not match what once existed. Perhaps as important as the general depression in the city economy is the sense that most Forum participants believe that *things will never be what they were*. From their perspective, the industries that once supported the community will never grow to what they once were. The combination of increased automation and global competition seems to them to add up to the need to change the community's economic base. However, the large companies involved in the Forum represent the *old ways*, and their concern is to ensure that they have a well-trained labor force. Clearly, these two perspectives on the economy both support efforts to reform education.

Demographically, the city and county share characteristics with most metropolitan areas. The city's population, particularly its school population, is largely African American and poor while most county school districts are white and middle class. A few inner suburban schools serve high numbers of African American students.

The traditional leadership of the city is engaged in several activities to foster collaboration with the goal of reviving the city. During SWRL's first site visit, one respondent said: "You sat in on a meeting this morning that had us interacting with 25-30 people and those 25-30 people are in large measures similar, not totally, but similar to the composition of the Forum. Then we have a third initiative...that also is a community-based merging effort to address children and family problems." Another talked of "12 to 19 people who meet in different settings on overlapping issues." Over the course of the three years, both the number of individuals involved in the variety of organizations concerned with reviving the city and the activities sponsored by the various groups increased, but the overlap in membership and the shared commitment remained high. In short, the city's leadership is committed to working together to revive it. The overlapping membership in the various initiatives indicates not only the commitment of traditional leadership, but also the small size of the leadership group.

Less significant for the city—but important for understanding the Forum is the historic role of a national foundation based in the city. The presence of this important source of funds for education and other community activities created an innovative atmosphere in the city. However, school officials came to rely on foundation funds, and when the foundation diminished its focus on the city, they tended to look at all innovation with some degree of cynicism or doubt about its efficacy.

Initiation

The Forum developed from three distinct events in the city, and the three events remained influential in how the Forum was structured. All participants agreed the grant application resulted from the recognition that the city was in trouble and that some type of collaborative activity would be useful. However, the motivation for joining the effort varied, depending on the event that spurred interest in joining forces around schooling issues.

A large number of participating businesses were influenced by a study sponsored by the business council in the year prior to the announcement of the availability of EPP funds. They studied the CSD and the students they were preparing and found that the potential labor pool was inadequate to the needs of the current and future workplace. Students were preparing (if at all) for well-paid, low-skilled jobs that no longer existed. The members of the health and human services committee were galvanized by a report on the condition of children in the city released by a communitywide policy-oriented organization that had equally dismal findings related to health and welfare. Educators, particularly in the county education office, were concerned that neither city nor county schools were sufficiently involved in the educational reform movement.

The Forum became the locus for all three concerns, and their ongoing influence was reflected in the development of the three subcommittees, each charged to address one of the issues.

The MFP encompasses organizations that had worked together prior to the founding of the Forum as well as the activities on which they worked. For example, the PDS at the middle school was a collaborative effort of the school and the remote university that was brought under the umbrella of the Forum.

The grant application was prepared at the county education office, with significant input from leaders of the business council and health policy group. They decided to include existing school-related efforts in the partnership. This decision led the proposal developers to look closely at one area of the CSD, in which the elementary school already housed a preschool program and had an active parent involvement program and the middle school was a PDS. As a matter of strategy, the proposal preparation group decided that the Forum should sponsor additional school-based activities, reflecting the three concerns, and that these activities should then be disseminated to additional city and county schools. This strategy later was referred to by participants as a "retail" strategy because it focused on change on a school-by-school basis.

Another early decision was the choice of the executive director of the Forum. The man selected was one with long-standing ties in the community. He had been an educator and then, later, a school board member. Almost as important, his family was closely tied with the national foundation based in the city. He was well-known and well-liked.

The executive director believed that the organizers of the Forum were strong individuals who represented strong and committed organizations. His leadership style was facilitative. That is, he sought to *find* consensus about the activities the Forum would undertake. He believed that two distinct motivations brought participants into the Forum: Some participants were concerned largely with developing in-school models for educational change, believing that spreading such models were an effective way to spread improved educational opportunities; another group focused primarily on the role of education in economic development. Although these two views are not mutually exclusive, the practical result was that the former group believed that the models developed in the targeted area should be such that they could readily—and quickly—be exported to county schools, while the latter group saw the city as having the greatest need for economic development and, therefore, did not think concern about the county schools should be central to the Forum's decisions. The executive director worked behind the scenes to find areas of agreement, avoiding conflict among Forum members.

During the first year of the MFP, the conflict simmered beneath the surface. Forum members were frustrated that their involvement seemed, in the words of many, "to lead nowhere." The school-based programs in the high school were particularly problematic, with many missed communications among Forum staff, high school staff, and the business community. More important, however, was the frustration of leaders of the two views of the MFP. The educator wanted some products, and the business council leader wanted greater workplace preparation. Only the health community was satisfied with the Forum, largely because of its support for the successful integrated services grant.

Implementation

The discussion of the implementation of the MFP that follows focuses on the changes in how the Forum worked during the course of EPP funding. It begins with an analysis of the MFP's structure and processes, particularly the changing leadership style that accompanied a change in the executive director. The second part includes a discussion of the activities the Forum was involved with and how they changed over time.

Structure

The Forum serves as an umbrella under which the MFP and other educational partnership activities were gathered. There are 60 members representing businesses (including the Chamber of Commerce); health care providers; other social service agencies; educational institutions (including the CSD, the local community college, the county school office; the local university; a more remote university; unions; the local community foundations; community-based organizations; and religious organizations. Forum members are the chief executive officers of the organizations that belong. The Forum met at least annually and set the broad objectives for the project. The Forum formed as a 501c(3) not-for-profit organization during its second year in existence.

Much of the work of the MFP takes place through the Work Group. The Work Group comprises the executive committee of the Forum as well as midlevel managers from businesses and health and human service agencies, teachers, principals, administrators, and community representatives. The Work Group met weekly during the first two years of the MFP, and then decreased the intensity of its interactions.

Members of the Work Group lead three subcommittees, which include representatives from the community, schools, businesses, and health and human service organizations. The education subcommittee is responsible mainly for in-school reform efforts, including the implementation of PDSs. The school-to-work transition subcommittee is concerned with the transition from school to work. And the health and human services subcommittee focuses on providing comprehensive health and human services to families in the CSD. Each of these sponsors activities related to its mission.

When the MFP began, the Forum and the Work Group were dominated by white middle class members, reflecting the focus on upper and middle management and the demographics of the community. African Americans represented the city government, the CSD, and the community college. Early on, some members of the Work Group were uncomfortable with the fact that their group did not reflect community demographics. As a result, they added an individual who represented the churches and one from a parent organization.

When the Forum began, the executive director consulted with key members of the Forum and the Work Team. His style was to visit the members individually to find out their concerns and interests. His goal was to facilitate the consensus, and the one-on-one meetings were designed to help him find areas of agreement so the underlying tensions among visions for the Forum would not disrupt the development of activities. The result was that problems and disagreements might surface at a Work Group meeting but were not discussed. Rather, the executive director would attempt to talk with those who disagreed before the next meeting of the group.

This facilitative leadership style, in which the executive director acted to carry out the Forum's and Work Group's wishes and to find areas of agreement, left many participants frustrated by the lack of progress. They felt positively about the successes of the group, such as winning the integrated services grant, but were concerned that many problems were emerging in the high school and that other activities were slow to get going. The first solution to the sense of lack of progress was to hire someone to provide technical assistance for group decisionmaking. In a series of retreats, the Forum worked with the outside facilitator to focus its efforts and to make plans for the subsequent years. At first, the technical assistance seemed to solve the problems, but dissatisfaction soon reemerged.

By the end of the second year of the MFP, the executive director announced his retirement. Although many Forum participants missed him as a friend, most saw his retirement as an opportunity to revitalize their efforts. The school-to-work transition subcommittee had been working with a young woman who was new to the community. She came to the city to develop programs that fit current thinking about the demands of the workplace and how schools should respond. Her high energy, commitment to educational reform to enhance economic development, close contact with key intellectuals concerned with work force development, and involvement in national political networks made her a prime candidate for executive director. Her approach to consensus was to work actively to *develop* it.

Although the new executive director's major concern was the transition from school to work, she saw the other problems facing the Forum. For example, she believed all school reform required basic structural change at the district level. Without changed policies and support, she thought, no educational reform would last or spread. Calling this a *wholesale* approach, she worked closely with the county education office and the school district to develop structures that would support widespread school reform. The analogy was to marketing, and the Forum became the *supplier* of ideas, policies, and practices that enabled the school districts to *deliver* reform to schools. For example, the CSD had already committed itself to *outcomes-based education*, and the executive director provided support for developing the outcomes required from vocational education, her major area of interest. These became the policies that changed curriculum, instruction, and assessment at all schools in the city. She also provided an arena in which the CSD could gather information and advice related to other concerns, including increasing the number of professional development schools and improving preschool and primary education.

In addition to intervening at the school district level, the executive director believed that it was necessary to educate the community about the new demands on education. Therefore, she convinced the Forum to sponsor a series of community meetings.

The executive director also was attuned to the internal politics of the Forum. She understood that the county office of education was unhappy that the original idea of developing model programs in the city and spreading them to the county was not working. The new *wholesale* approach to school reform implied that county school districts also would need to change district policies and practices. Consequently, working closely with the school-to-work subcommittee, particularly the representative of the business council, she identified county school districts that were interested in being the site of Forum activities. She also helped find matching funds to carry out those activities.

As a result of her changed approach to Forum policies and practices, participants' satisfaction increased. The representative from the business council became convinced that focusing business efforts on areas that the Forum saw as essential to school reform would enhance the impact of their activities. The first step in ensuring that the Forum was the focal point for business activity related to education was to gain the commitment from the largest employer in the area, which had a foundation, to use the Forum as the foundation board. That is, the employer foundation gave the Forum the authority to recommend how it should distribute its funds. This decision ensured the Forum's role as leader of educational reform.

Although the formal structure of the MFP did not change, the policies and processes it used to make decisions did. The new executive director gained the support of key members of the Forum and both focused and expanded the Forum's role.

Activities

The Forum began with a number of activities already in place that it brought under the MFP umbrella. During the first years of the partnership, efforts were made to develop additional activities at three schools in one area of the city. Some of these were successful, but the work at the high school led to much frustration on the part of Forum and Work Group members as well as teachers and administrators in the school. Following the change of executive director, MFP activities changed, and schools in the county as well as in the city were the locus of reform efforts.

This section begins with a description of the activities that the Forum drew under its umbrella. It then moves to a discussion and analysis of the activities the Forum began or encouraged at the start of the MFP. The section ends with the activities that are continuing under the auspices of the Forum.

Pre-Existing Activities

The MFP brought existing activities that involved multiple organizations under the Forum's aegis. Such activities existed in the CSD elementary and middle school that were the focus of early Forum activities. The elementary school had long run a well-regarded preschool program. It also had an active parent group, whose efforts were directed at such matters as working with parents to help them ease children's transition between preschool and kindergarten. The preschool and parent program became major elements in the education subcommittee's activities at the school.

The middle school had two major sets of activities that predated the establishment of the Forum. One, which had begun with foundation funding but was well-integrated into the school when the MFP began, was a school-to-work transition program that focused on health careers. As such, it captured the interest of both the school-to-work and health and human services subcommittees. Through the career-oriented program, students visited local health facilities, could work with health professionals as mentors, and, in general explored health careers. The links between the local hospitals and other health providers and the middle school were strong. They formed the basis of further Forum activities.

In addition to the career education activities, the middle school was a professional development school, collaborating with the remote university. As a PDS, it was involved in shared decision-making at the school site. This changed roles and relationships between teachers and administrators and among teachers. Further, the university placed a cadre of student teachers in the school, and their supervisors served as technical assistants for the entire school staff. The student teachers, school staff, and university supervisors worked together to reorganize teaching and learning at the middle school. The PDS was successful, and the university sought another CSD school to serve in a similar capacity.

The CSD had moved to site-based management, and the proposal for EPP funding highlighted the opportunity to create teams of individuals from business and the schools for staff and organizational development related to site-based management. However, when the Forum and the Work Team met, there was little interest in pursuing such activities.

Early Activities

Once EPP funding was received, the Forum and the Work Team subcommittees began program development. Although the application for the foundation grant for integrated services was submitted through another organization, the Forum provided space for the grant writer. More important, the health and human services subcommittee engaged in brainstorming and reviewed drafts of the application. The grant writer believed that their input was "essential." Because the MFP and integrated services application were intertwined, the decision to place the pilot effort at the elementary school was easy. Further justification for the placement lay in its existing parent and community outreach activities and the principal's support.

In addition to the integrated services project, the elementary school also developed early career awareness materials under the sponsorship of the school-to-work committee. Teachers and administrators from the school integrated the career awareness into the existing curricula, and teachers received some in-services about the new activities.

Building on the positive relationships between health care providers and the middle school, the health and human services subcommittee decided to establish a school-based health clinic on the grounds of the middle school facility. The school and local providers began planning during the first year of the MFP, and the clinic was operational by the third year. Site administrators and teachers, although not deeply involved in the daily operation of the clinic, valued its presence and referred students and parents to it. Clinic staff became mentors in the health careers program.

The MFP encountered the greatest difficulties in working with the high school. High school teachers expressed concern about the difficulties students were having in making the transition from the middle school to the high school. They wanted to create a *school-within-a-school* for the students who were experiencing the greatest difficulty. Although the education subcommittee supported the idea, there were problems in getting started. The teachers were promised either release time or compensation and believed that approval of the plan implied approval of compensation. However, the fiscal agent argued that more detailed information was required to justify the expenditure of funds. The teachers expressed anger at having "to jump through hoops," and although they worked on developing the school-within-a-school, progress was slow.

Even greater problems arose in the development of career-focused academies. The school-to-work subcommittee wholeheartedly embraced the concept of developing several academies, which would be schools-within-a-school, that focused on career paths. The chair of the school-to-work subcommittee was the representative of the business council, and he was enthusiastic about the possibilities. Academy development worked on two tracks. A group of teachers volunteered to plan the school-based portion, and subcommittee members sought internship and mentor placements in the community. The teachers experienced the same problem as did those involved in developing a transition program for high school entrants. That is, they were asked to write, and then rewrite, a formal proposal. They, too, continued work, but slowly. Further, because they worked after school, they reported that their energy levels were too low to make rapid progress.

The subcommittee members were able to find a number of business placements for students and arranged transportation to and from the work sites. However, a newly appointed principal, who had not been involved in the planning, created barriers for students' leaving school. From his perspective, their leaving interrupted the educational program. He also resented the subcommittee chair's incursion on the principal's authority over the school. The combination of slow teacher progress and the principal's reluctance to participate led to great frustration concerning the high school programs. By the end of the second year of the MFP, there seemed little hope that much would happen in the high school. In fact, an assistant principal, who had accepted the assignment to the high school because of the opportunity to work with the Forum, transferred to another school.

Even in the early years of the MFP, some activities took place within the CSD. The Forum supported the district's move to site-based management and outcomes-based education. The most concrete sign of the support lay in the assistance given to improvement in the preschool and primary grades. The Forum provided partial support for one year for a position in the district office to oversee the primary grade reform program. Some members of the education subcommittee wanted to use MFP funds to support organizational and staff development related to the move to site-based management. This was one of the issues, however, on which there was unresolved disagreement.

Many members of the subcommittees, Work Team, and Forum pointed with pride at the activities that fell under the Forum's umbrella. But a small, influential, and growing group believed that progress had stalled. In their eyes, the Forum could be successful with "easy" activities—extending an existing program, adding on a school-based clinic. The failures, they felt, were more important because they signaled the inability of the partnership to grapple with fundamental issues in school reform. In addition, the county education office, which represented districts in the county as well as the CSD, was getting impatient with the Forum's inability to develop transportable model programs. From a political standpoint, the county office was in the uncomfortable position of constantly explaining why all resources were concentrated on the CSD, and other constituents received no benefits from the partnership grant. Educationally, a new understanding of how to achieve reform was entering the literature. The new view argued that transporting model programs, school by school (the "retail" strategy), was too slow an approach to fundamental reform. Instead, according to that perspective, reform was best accomplished by a "wholesale" strategy that concentrated on changing policies and practices at the district (and state) levels in order to build local school capacity for reform.

The tensions that lay beneath the surface were not well-addressed by the MFP's policymaking group, the Forum. Probably because of all the stresses, the executive director retired. The appointment of his replacement led to changes in the approach of the Forum.

Later Activities

The new executive director came to the Forum with a background in, and deep commitments to, educational reform that would enhance the employability of young people. Because she was well-connected to the national academic and political communities that were debating how to revive American competitiveness, she was an enthusiastic proponent of "systemic" change in state and district policies and practices that would restructure teaching and learning in the schools. Curriculum and instruction should, she believed, increase students' problem solving and communication abilities. School programs also should, in her eyes, involve high technology so that students will be ready for the workplace of the future. Consequently, the Forum stopped its own perceived drift and focused its attention on the school-to-work programs.

The increased focus on school-to-work issues was accompanied by other changes in Forum-sponsored activities as well. First, it increased attention to school district policies and practices. As a result of the change, for example, the Forum supported the development of vocational education competencies for the CSD that were designed in conjunction with the outcomes-based education approach.

Second, both the focus on technology and the newly adopted wholesale strategy led to the greater involvement of county school districts. Two became the site of model programs, one involved developing a high technology school of the future. The involvement of county schools addressed an internal political issue as well by ensuring that a constituent group that had felt ignored by the MFP now had reason to support it.

According to the executive director, the county school was chosen to be the site of the high technology school because the school board and the superintendent were committed to the effort. The Forum provided support only for planning, and the district was to seek additionally soft money and reallocate hard money to support its full development and institutionalization. The executive director, members of the school-to-work subcommittee, and Forum members believed that the CSD was unable to make a similar commitment. Further, they said, community support for high technology was greater in the county than in the city. Their efforts (described below) to change community attitudes in the city were an appropriate way of building support for the development of similar opportunities for city children. Although it is true that CSD staff were satisfied with the support they received and raised no questions about the high technology school in the county, it is true also that the Forum did not support the same challenging opportunities for poor, ethnic minority children as it did for their wealthier, primarily white, counterparts in the county.

The third change in MFP activities involved an active effort to change community attitudes toward the schools. The executive director and other active members of the Forum believed that parents and others, particularly in the city, were content with their schools. But, from the perspective of those concerned with economic competitiveness, the schools were failing to prepare youth for the workplace of the future. If fundamental educational reform were to occur, they argued, the community must become aware of the necessity for such changes. This line of reasoning led the Forum to be the major sponsor of a series of public meetings about education. The Forum arranged for outside, provocative speakers, and worked closely with the local newspaper and other media outlets. As a result, the community meetings gained much attention, and, according to those involved, increased support for the needed changes in schools. This, too, was part of the *wholesale* strategy toward school reform. Each year, to keep attention and interest on school reform, the Forum works with the newspaper to provide follow-up information to the community. For two years, the follow-up stories highlighted the innovations sponsored by the Forum.

The *new* Forum did not stop the successful activities. In fact, it assisted the remote university to develop a second PDS in the high school in which the Forum had been unsuccessful.

The university made some progress in the school. The Forum also continued support for the career education, preschool, and parent activities at the elementary school. The health and human services subcommittee became an arena for discussion and problem solving around concerns that the integrated services program at the elementary school was underused, indicating continuing commitment to that initiative. And, in an effort to develop academies, the school-to-work transition subcommittee began working with a second high school to develop internships and mentoring programs. The work with the second high school was facilitated by the presence of the former assistant principal of the first high school.

Summary

The MFP was successful in some ways from the start. However, numerous problems existed beneath the surface success. The first executive director had a facilitative leadership style, and his efforts to find areas of consensus meant that many problems were not addressed and that frustration continued. He focused a great deal on ensuring that the three concerns that brought the partners together were equally represented in Forum programs. Consequently, no one was fully satisfied. The health and human services subcommittee was, as one participant put it, "first out of the block," due to the integrated services grant. But the education and school-to-work subcommittees had both successes and failures, and the failures centered on activities of greatest concern to powerful members of the Forum.

The second executive director was most concerned about a single area, the transition from school-to-work and the reform of education so that the local economy could be competitive in the world market. Although she did not ignore the other areas, most of her attention and new activities of the Forum were devoted to preparing education to respond to the new workplace. This involved a large community education component, as well as the development of model technology-based programs and school district policies that support fundamental change.

The revitalization of the Forum following the appointment of the new executive director was clear. Equally clear was that less attention was devoted to CSD schools, and the activities the Forum supported in the county had the potential for increasing the economic gap between the city and the county.

Impact

The impact of the MFP is difficult to assess through typical evaluation approaches. It focused its efforts on changing district policies and procedures, so changes in student outcomes are likely to occur in subsequent years. However, the Forum had several concrete accomplishments by the end of EPP funding. These included the development of the CSD preschool-primary transition program, the inclusion of career-oriented information in the elementary school curriculum, the establishment of the school-based health clinic at the middle school, the addition of a professional development school at the high school, the technology-oriented activities in two county school districts, and the adoption of an outcomes-based vocational education curriculum by the CSD. Most notably, the MFP had a major impact on community attitudes toward education through its sponsorship of a series of community meetings. In addition, programs, such as the integrated services program at the elementary school, that were loosely associated with the Forum were established. This section focuses on the impact of Forum activities on the community and on school district policies in both the CSD and county schools. It also includes a brief analysis of the mixed results of some other Forum-associated programs.

One outcome frequently desired from educational partnerships is that they have a positive impact on how the community views the schools. Among the partnerships funded by the EPP, however, few had any impact on community support for or understanding of school-related issues (Tushnet et al., 1995). In contrast, the MFP had a major impact on its community. The difference lies in the attention paid to community support. The second executive director believed that fundamental changes were needed in schools but that the community was complacent about the public schools. Consequently, she led the Forum's efforts to engage the public in an ongoing dialogue about education and the demands of the workplace. Through a series of public meetings and close collaboration with local media outlets, the Forum developed a visible presence in the city. It also gathered support for the changes it was advocating. Few other partnerships devoted similar time and effort to the community, and few had the kind of impact of the MFP.

Although the *wholesale* strategy of working to change policies and procedures rather than implement model programs on a school-by-school basis (the *retail* strategy) does not yield data about student enrollment and outcomes, its success can be measured by whether changes in policy occur. And, in both the city and county, there were notable changes. In the CSD, for example, the preschool-primary transition program now exists throughout the district, and a central office staff member has been assigned to work with teachers and principals to ensure that all children benefit from it. The approach involves changing structures, by breaking down the division between the preschool and early primary grades; curriculum, by focusing on reading and mathematics in contexts meaningful to children; and instruction, by grouping children in a variety of ways, not just by age. Similarly, the CSD adoption of an outcomes-based approach to vocational education led to changes in course structure, content, and sequence. The changes were not confined to the vocational track because many outcomes, such as those that focused on problem solving, required changes in nonvocational subjects as well. In the county, the two school districts that actively participated in Forum activities changed practices as well. For example, the school district that was moving toward a technology-oriented curriculum in the high school was engaged in major changes in curriculum and instruction. The school also worked closely with the community so it would receive the necessary support for its efforts.

Activities associated with the Forum had mixed success. The middle school's health clinic was well-used, and the health professionals working in it joined the existing health careers program as mentors to students. However, the integrated services program at the elementary school was not so well-attended. Although the health and human services committee had implemented a community needs assessment in conjunction with the grant application, they found that few families took advantage of the workshops and other activities offered at the center. They raised concerns at Work Group meetings, but neither executive director made the issue central to Forum tasks. The first executive director avoided public discussions of problems, preferring to find solutions through private conversations. Consequently, opportunities to involve a wide group of individuals in diagnosing the cause of the underuse were not taken. And, although the second executive director actively sought agreement, she viewed the integrated services program as ancillary to the core mission of the Forum.

The middle school is perhaps the most successful site of Forum activities in the CSD. Not only are the health clinic and health careers program working well, but the existence of the PDS has influenced morale at the school. It also has changed relationships among teachers and administrators. Further, teachers report teaching in a more "problem-centered" way. That is, their efforts are to make school work real and help prepare students to deal with complex vocational and civic issues.

Institutionalization

The MFP is among the most fully institutionalized of all EPP-funded partnerships. The Forum has become a permanent fixture in the community, and there is every indication that it will continue. In addition, several activities sponsored by the MFP have been institutionalized in the participating schools and school districts. The following section addresses institutionalization in two ways. First, it focuses on how the partnership structure, the Forum, became institutionalized. Then, it looks at the activities that are likely to continue.

Structure

The MFP is embodied by the Forum, which includes representation of the CEOs and other high-level executives from business, education, and health and human service agencies. During the second year of funding, the Forum was organized into a 501c(3) not-for-profit organization. As such, it can hire staff, receive funds, and distribute money to particular activities. The Forum's continuation as a freestanding organization seems certain for two reasons. One reason lies in its increased role in community activities, and the other in the fact that the largest local employer plans to allocate its funds to education through the Forum. Each of these reasons is discussed in turn.

The executive director is well-connected to academic and political circles concerned with preparing youth to enter the new, globally competitive workplace. As such, her ideas, as well as her energy, put the Forum in a central position for community activities. For example, the Forum president serves as chair of the local community development task force subcommittee on education, with the executive director as staff. The purpose of the task force is to align the local development agenda with national policies. The executive director was seen as key to ensuring that the education agenda would fit with emerging policies. Several business representatives expressed continuing support for the Forum because it was "one way to tie us to the nation." Their support has been in the form of donated space for Forum offices. At the same time, a local union also supports the continuation of the Forum by donating secretarial time.

Perhaps most important in ensuring the continuation of the Forum is the fact that it now has a major role in dispersing private funds to education. About 10 years ago, the largest employer in the community created a mechanism for providing money and other support to educational institutions. Over the years, there have been numerous grants made to the CSD and county school districts. However, concerns were expressed, both within the company and the community at large, that the grants did not have an impact on "important things." Representatives from the company were included in the Forum. When the Forum had been in operation for three years, these representatives suggested that the way for the company to make the greatest impact was to work through the Forum. Currently, the Forum recommends priority funding areas to the company, evaluates grant applications, and recommends which efforts should be supported. Company funds, then, provide the Forum with an ongoing presence in instituting educational reform in the area much as EPP funds had been used to stimulate policy changes and program development.

Activities

Activities sponsored by the Forum also have been institutionalized. For example, the preschool-primary transition program is now fully supported by the CSD. And, although the Forum still provides funds and support to the committee developing the curriculum and assessments associated with the outcome-based vocational education program, the CSD assigns staff and supports staff development related to its institutionalization. Further, the two PDSs are likely to continue with their collaboration with the remote university. At the middle school, the health clinic and health careers program will be continued, and the career information component at the elementary school is fully integrated into the curriculum.

In contrast, the various career-related academies at the high school were never fully developed, and further work on them seems unlikely to occur. Similarly, the school-within-a-school program for students who encountered difficulty making the transition from middle school to high school, while more developed, seems unlikely to continue. Both efforts lack administrative support, which makes them vulnerable.

The integrated services program at the elementary school also is at risk when the grant money ends. Although the health and human services subcommittee of the Work Group is committed to its continuation, the center has not become embedded in the community. As a result, members of the subcommittee believe that the center will need two or three additional years of "soft money" to demonstrate its value. The source of such money is unclear.

The two county school districts were seeking support to continue Forum-initiated activities. The district that was planning the high technology-oriented school was seeking voter approval for a bond issue that would allow it to make major renovations in the schools. If the bond issue passes, the technology initiative's continuation would be assured.

Finally, the community education efforts are likely to continue. Spurred by the Forum, the local newspaper is committed to at least annual follow-up attention to changes occurring in education in response to the changing workplace. Further, the executive director does not rule out the possibility of new community meetings. She believes that it would be appropriate to allocate funds from the major employer to such an endeavor if Forum members agree.

In sum, the majority of activities initiated or supported by the MFP are either institutionalized or likely to be so. Perhaps more important, Forum representatives have begun to develop and implement new activities. For example, a joint union-business group began providing organizational development support to the CSD. It did so after many discussions by the education subcommittee, which includes representatives from the CSD, about the district's capacity to succeed in changing policies and practices and with the Forum's approval. This development underscores the centrality of the Forum to educational reform in the community.

Conclusion

The MFP provides a rich case for analysis. Its story is of success and failure, with success predominating throughout its history. The unhappiness of some participants in the early years was less related to objective failure than to a sense that more could happen. Their current satisfaction relates to a change in leader and leadership style. The very success of the MFP, however, raises two deeper issues concerning educational partnerships: whether the choice of strategy for educational reform has an impact on equity among students, and whether educational partnerships should aim to include individuals with influence in their organizations or focus more on community representation. This section begins with a brief discussion of the leadership issue and then turns to the two dilemmas faced by the Forum.

Leadership

The original executive director of the Forum was a well-liked, well-connected man with a long history in the community. His style was to avoid open conflict and to seek areas in which individuals agreed. He saw himself as staff to the Forum, empowered to carry out the wishes of the members, but not to initiate activities. His approach was to meet individually with key Forum members and then build agendas of the Forum and the Work Group that would result in consensual action. Consequently, many issues were never raised nor addressed, and participants expressed frustration with "progress" despite objective evidence of many successes.

In part, the frustration stemmed from the fact that the Forum represented people with different concerns. The educators were centrally concerned with the CSD's move to site-based management and sought ways to increase teachers' influence on school organization, curriculum, and instruction. PDS provided one model, but the university could not operate professional development schools throughout the city and county. At the same time, efforts to generate an alternative approach, by creating schools-within-a-school at the high school were making little progress. As a result, members of the education subcommittee felt as though they were not making sufficient progress. Similarly, members of the school-to-work transition subcommittee were frustrated by the slow progress in developing the academies at the high school. Only the health and human services subcommittee felt positively because its early effort resulted in successfully competing for a grant.

The first executive director neither confronted the discontent nor addressed the underlying problems. Rather, he tried talking with high school staff and subcommittee members. He was working to develop common understandings, but none seemed to come about.

One solution was to bring in an outside facilitator to work with the Forum. In a series of retreats, the Forum attempted to set priorities. However, because such priorities might favor one group over another, the executive director did not actively support particular approaches.

After his retirement, the new executive director took a more active leadership stance. She came to the Forum with deep commitments about what students needed to be able to do to be successfully employed in a high technology, global economy. Her approach was not to *find* consensus but to *build* it. She actively promoted her ideas, finding key supporters who could argue the case at Forum and Work Group meetings. Perhaps most important, she offered an agenda of activities that would demonstrate the value of the focus on workplace issues. These activities included assisting the CSD to revise its approach to vocational education, initiating a high technology demonstration school in a county school district, and sponsoring a community education program that would increase support for school reform. She, and the key supporters, did everything they could to ensure the success of these activities.

The more active leadership of the second executive director revived the Forum. She did not denigrate or cease the activities begun earlier that did not relate directly to the workplace issues. Rather, she put the spotlight and the new energy on school-to-work transition, as broadly defined.

The two executive directors offer a contrast between facilitative and visionary leadership. The visionary leader had greater success than her predecessor.

Dilemmas

The MFP raises two dilemmas related to the role of educational partnerships in educational reform:

- Adopting a "retail" strategy of developing and exporting model programs versus a "wholesale" strategy of changing policies and procedures to support educational reform; and
- Centrally involving individuals who are able to bring about change versus centrally involving individuals who are likely to know what changes need to be made.

Each of these dilemmas is discussed in turn.

Strategy

The MFP engaged in two different educational reform strategies over the course of EPP funding. It began with a strategy, termed "retail," of creating programs on a school-by-school basis. The goal was to develop model programs that could be exported to other schools in the city and county. However, the original focus was on three high-need schools. In one, little progress was made. And, although Forum-generated activities were successful in the other two, there was particular concern that their activities focused on families and students with multiple problems had little to offer county schools. In the end, the retail strategy was too slow and seemed ungeneralizable for participants in the MFP. However, its value lay in the concentrated effort in schools that have great need for change.

The Forum later adopted what it called a "wholesale" strategy, focusing on policies and procedures that would enhance the ability of a school district to support fundamental reform. This led the Forum to continue work with the CSD on the district level and to find districts that were "eager to embrace best practice change strategies." The change muted some criticisms of the Forum, particularly from county residents. Further, the activities that it initiated were more exciting to Work Group members than the early school-based programs. The new approach seemed to promise greater change, and consequently more impact.

The Forum did not abandon the CSD, encouraging a union-business group to provide assistance with organizational development and continuing its work with the competency-based vocational education program. Both are examples of the "wholesale" strategy.

School reform efforts historically have confronted the dilemma between focused attention to one site and broad policy and information strategies. Both strategies have led to success as well as failure (Berman, 1980; Louis & Miles, 1991; Marsh & Bowman, 1988). In the context in which the MFP operated, the issue is complicated by the fact that the city, in which the retail strategy was pursued, is a largely minority school district that is suffering from numerous financial problems, and the county, which became part of the wholesale strategy, is more affluent and white.

Individual Involvement

One issue that confronts all educational partnerships is the question of who should represent the participating organizations and communities. On the one hand, involving individuals who hold high positions in the organizations promises to ensure that changes in organizational policies and processes required by the partnership are made. On the other hand, such individuals may not be in touch with the real needs of the community or may not understand resistance to change.

The MFP chose to involve individuals with perceived clout. The Forum comprised top-level executives from educational, business, health, human service, and community agencies. The Work Group included midlevel and above representatives from the same organizations. And, indeed, these individuals made changes in how their organizations operated in response to needs identified through the Forum. Perhaps the most notable was the decision by the large employer to empower the Forum to decide how it should use its charitable funds related to education.

The decision had a downside, as indicated by two areas that were problems for the MFP. The first, of course, was the failure to make progress in the high school. The principal of the school expressed feelings that he was not asked about the activities being developed by the Forum. He did not object to their broad objectives, but believed his input would have helped in their design. Further, he said he was not sure that the academies responded to the school's most important problems. Even some participating teachers agreed. They particularly complained about the requirement that they write formal proposals to the Forum.

Second, the integrated services center was underused. Although the health and human services subcommittee carried out a needs assessment in conjunction with the preparation of the grant application, few activities sponsored by the center were highly used. The health services, particularly related to pre-enrollment health examinations and immunization, were well-used, but the family support activities were not. Members of the health and human services subcommittees discussed ways of increasing community input, but the community was not well-represented on the subcommittee.

Again, the dilemma is made more difficult in the specific community context. In the community, the majority of individuals with power and authority are white and middle and upper class. In the city, at least, the majority of students and their families represent minority groups and are poor.

Although Forum CSD representatives supported the Forum and did not raise questions about differences in treatment between the city and the county, the fact remains that the high technology school, designed to prepare students at the "cutting edge," is located in a white county school, and the CSD's reform of vocational education, while superior to most urban programs, is a far cry from the edge.

The nature of dilemmas is that there are no easy answers. Each decision carries with it positive and negative outcomes. The Forum, however, demonstrates that educational partnerships, while a potentially important force for educational reform, do not automatically avoid—or solve—problems that confront civic and social institutions. The Forum also demonstrates that positive outcomes are possible without perfect solutions to ongoing problems.

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